Shojo Beat Manga

BABY & Me™

Story & Art by

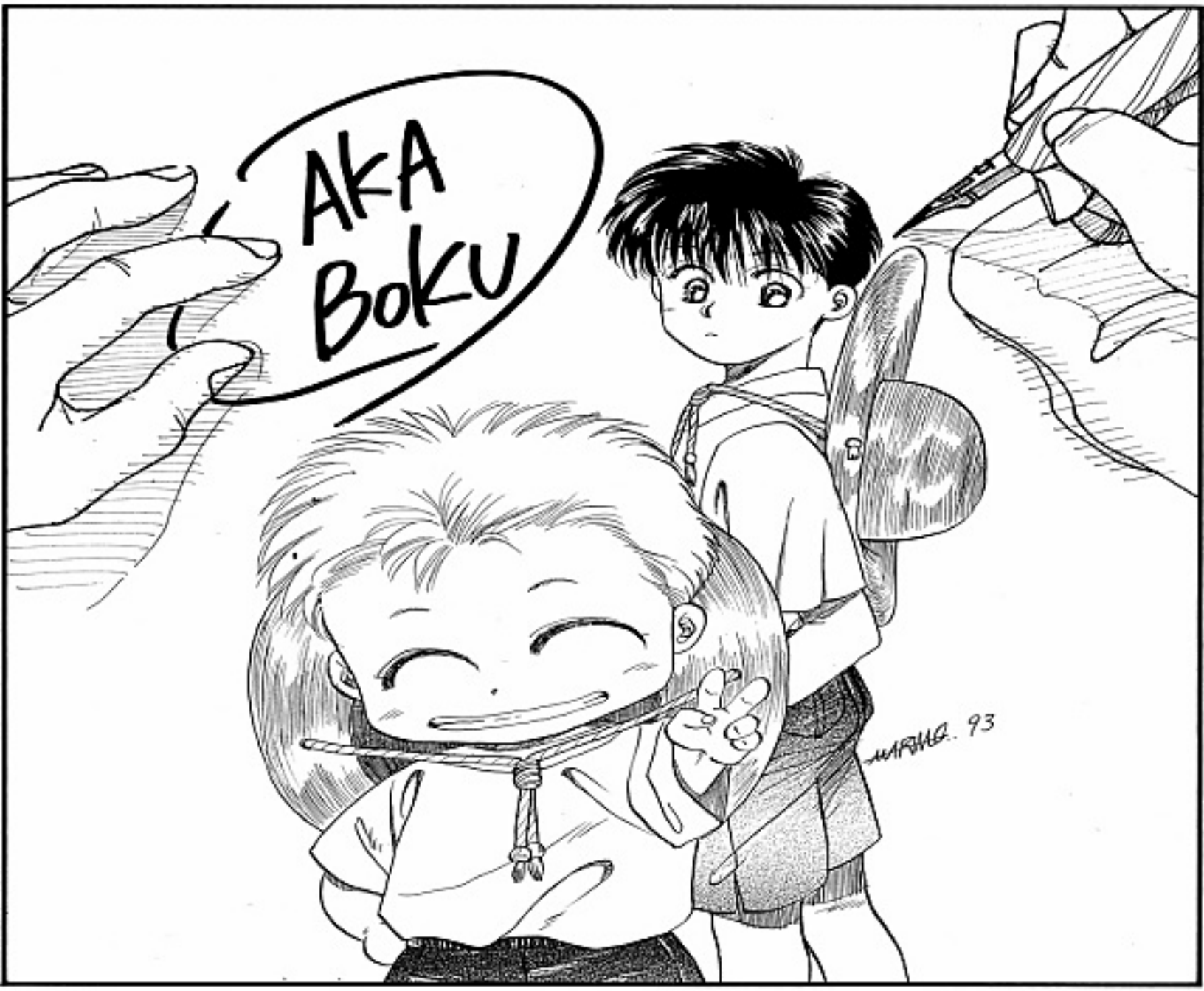
Marimo Ragawa

5

Shojo Beat

BABY & Me™

Vol. 5



Story & Art by **Marimo Ragawa**

BABY & Me™

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BABY & Me

Chapter 22

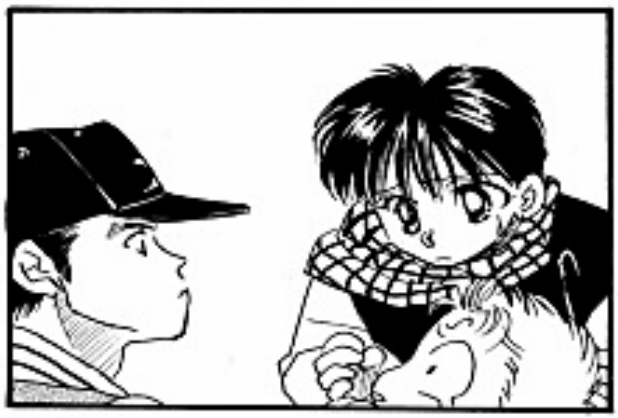
ACROSS THE STREET FROM US...
...LIVES A SLIGHTLY WEIRD COUPLE NAMED THE KIMURAS.
SNORE
SNORE

I WISH DAD WOULD GET HOME.
UH...
PAT PAT
WHAT'S THIS GUY DOING IN FRONT OF SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE?
SMOKE
SMOKE
WOO
WHAP
ACK?!
DON'T...

HUH?
OH... MINORU!!
GWAAH!!
DON'T YOU DRINK MY BEER!!
DAZED
GLUB
GLUB
SWUMP

HUH?!
TAKUYA?! YOU'RE TAKUYA, RIGHT?

UM...



HERE ...
WHUP
WAAH!!

DADDY...
TAP
BOY, YOU'VE REALLY GROWN! GOSH!
WHO ARE YOU?!
SNIFF
SNIFF
WHAT?!
HE'S A FRIEND OF DAD'S?!
SEIICHI?
HARUMI!!
HA...
HARUMI!!!
Rollfast
INDIANAPOLIS

MINORU'S HEAD

...SON?
YOU'RE THE KIMURA'S...
WHAT?!
WHY'RE YOU SO SURPRISED?
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
YEAH. I'M SEIICHI KIMURA. I'M 23.
YOU WERE SO MEAN TO HIM, HE'S PROBABLY SUPPRESSED THOSE MEMORIES.
?
REALLY?
YOU WERE FIVE THEN. DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?
I LEFT HOME SIX YEARS AGO.
WELL... I DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD KIDS.

MINORU CAN'T HOLD HIS FINGERS UP VERY WELL.

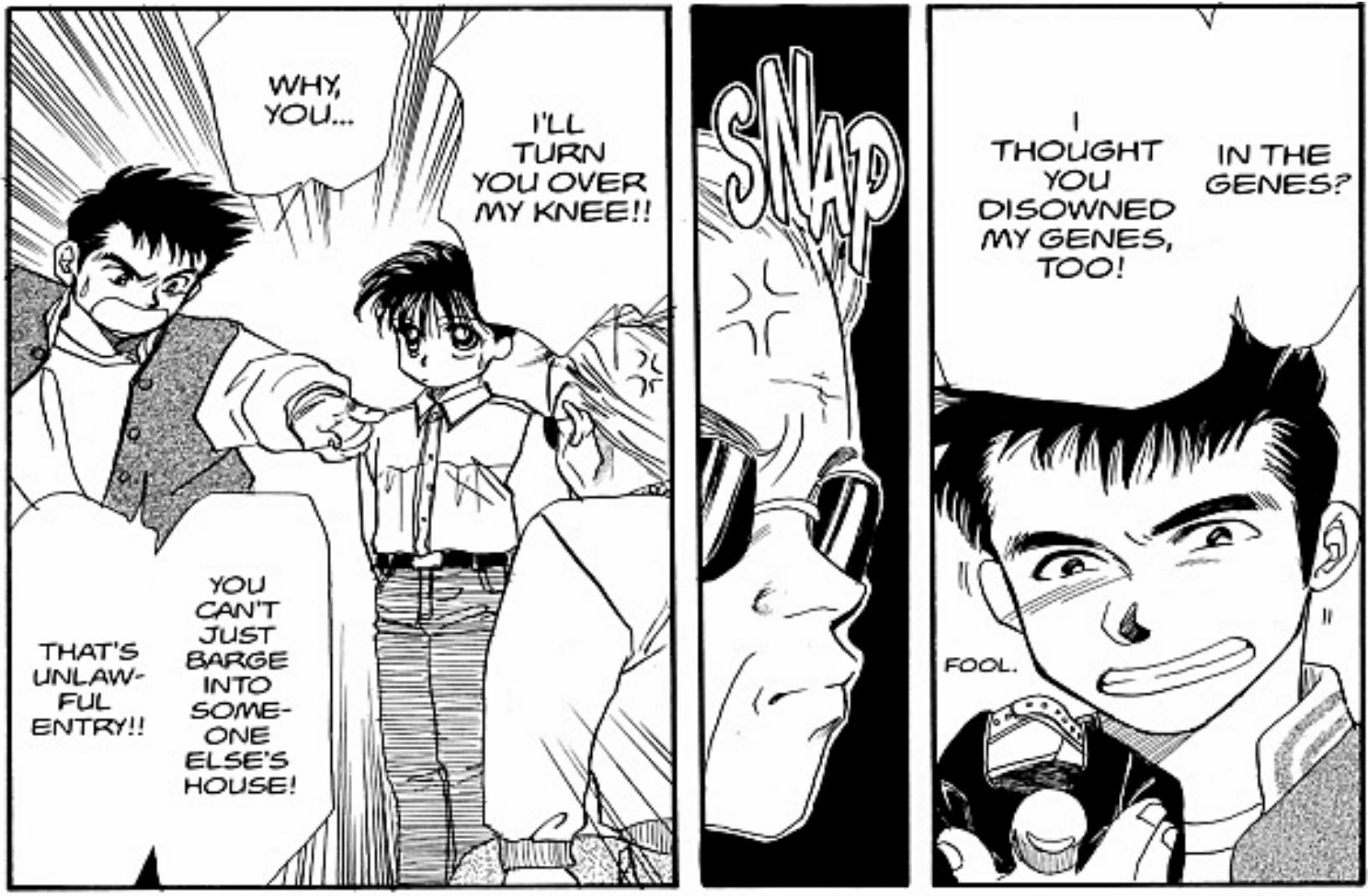
EEEG!
WHOOF
FWOOSH
UM... YOU SAID YOU LEFT HOME SIX YEARS AGO.
WHY WAS THAT?
WELL...
HAW HAW HAW
...
WAAA
KOFF
AH
KOFF
THEY TOLD ME TO GET LOST.
WHEN I SHOWED UP, MY PARENTS WEREN'T EXACTLY OVERJOYED TO SEE ME.
IF I HADN'T LEFT, THEY WOULD'VE BOOTED ME OUT FOR SURE.
MY PRESENCE WAS NO LONGER DESIRED.

OH. OUR MOTHER...
SHE'S PROBABLY MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER.
YUKAKO. THAT'S YOUR MOTHER'S NAME, ISN'T IT?
HUH?
WHERE'S YUKAKO?
SO, ANYWAY ...
SHE WENT HOME TO HER MOTHER!
YUKAKO LEFT YOU.
Hee
Hee
Hee
HyUk
THE TRUTH IS, SEIICHI ...
KLINK
KLINK
LISTEN ...
SEIICHI ...
SHE ON A TRIP?
HEY! I THOUGHT HER PARENTS WERE DEAD OR SOMETHING.
I SEE.
OH, I GET IT.
HEH

GLOOM
WELL...
HUH?
WHAT?
LAST YEAR. JUST BEFORE SPRING.
THAT'S NOT FUNNY!!
AW, COME ON!
MOM DIED.
FOR REALS?
HUH?

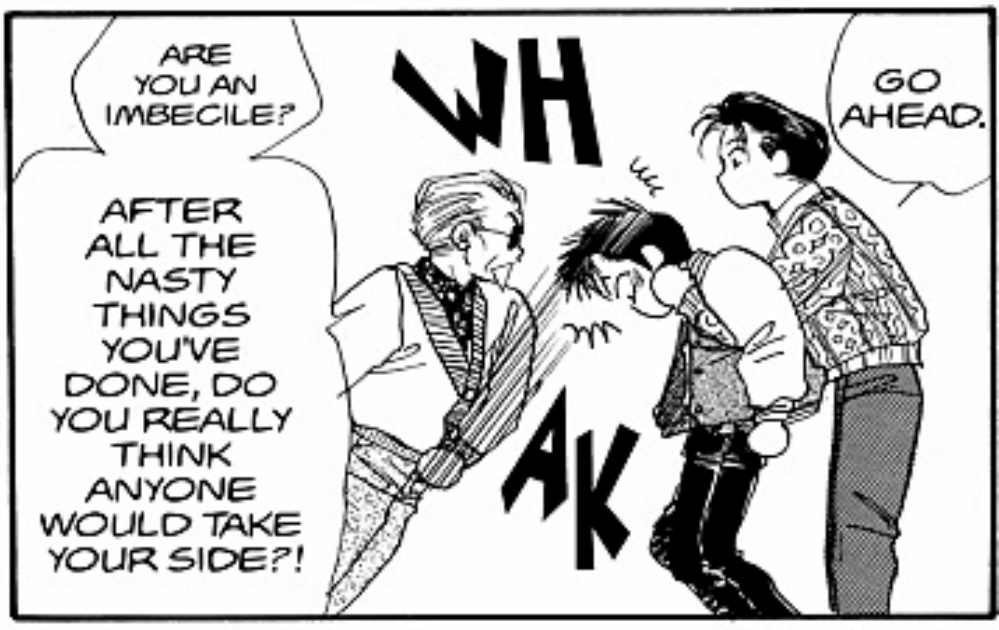
SEIICHI DIDN'T SAY ANOTHER WORD ABOUT IT.
I LIKE MINE SWEET.
HOW MANY?
FOUR.
YUCK.
HELLO...
HELLO...?
TMP TMP
YES?
OH, MR. KIMURA...
YOUR DOORBELL BATTERY'S DEAD.
TWITCH
THAT VOICE...
UM....
GUESS WHAT.
THAT FOOLISH SON OF MINE IS HERE, ISN'T HE?

...THROW HIM OUT, WILL YOU?
WELL...
HE'S HERE, ALL RIGHT.
FOOL-ISH?
UH... YEAH...
THERE YOU ARE, FOOL.
OH...
WHAT?! SHUT UP, OLD MAN! I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE YOUR ABUSE!!
YOU FOOL! SOONER OR LATER, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR HAIR TOO. IT'S IN THE GENES.
BET YOU'D KILL FOR MY FULL HEAD OF BLACK HAIR.
NOT MUCH HAIR LEFT, HUH?
HEH HEH HEH
HEH HEH
GRR... DARN YOU, OLD MAN...
YOU'RE NO SAINT EITHER!!
...YET HERE HE STANDS, ONE BIG EYESORE.
MY SON DISAPPEARED SIX YEARS AGO. I CONSIDER HIM DEAD...


WHY, YOU...
I'LL TURN YOU OVER MY KNEE!!
THAT'S UNLAW-FUL ENTRY!!
YOU CAN'T JUST BARGE INTO SOME-ONE ELSE'S HOUSE!
SNAP
I THOUGHT YOU DISOWNED MY GENES, TOO!
IN THE GENES?
FOOL.

YAP
YAP
THEY'RE FIGHTING LIKE LITTLE KIDS.
OH NO! BWAZA...
YAP

WHAP
HEY?!


ARE YOU AN IMBECILE?
AFTER ALL THE NASTY THINGS YOU'VE DONE, DO YOU REALLY THINK ANYONE WOULD TAKE YOUR SIDE?!
WH
AK
GO AHEAD.

WHAT?!
NO!!
DON'T YOU TRUST ME?
YES?
TAKUYA...
GRR- GRR-
WHAP
NOBODY'S GOING TO BE HOME. JUST BE GLAD WE LET YOU STAY THE NIGHT.
WE HAVE WORK, SCHOOL, AND NURSERY SCHOOL.
WHY DO I HAVE TO LEAVE, TOO?
KUN
I'LL WATCH THE HOUSE FOR YOU.
UM...NO.
HE DID A LOT OF MEAN THINGS TO YOU.
YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER?
WHY NOT?
LISTEN, I DON'T WANT YOU HANGING AROUND WITH HIM.

SEIICHI'S BACK?!
WHAT?!
GOTOH

IT'S NO USE. I JUST DON'T REMEMBER SEIICHI.
OH?!

WHAT DID HE DO TO ME?
GRADE 6-2

NAH...
WAS HE A DELIN-QUENT?
FOR A WHILE, HE WAS BANNED FROM THE SHOPPING MALL.
JUST A TROUBLE-MAKER.

WUZZ
WUZZ
YOU KNOW HIM, GON?
HE NEVER DID ANY-THING TO ME, BUT...
ZIPP

HUH?
IT'S A PRETTY DISGUSTING STORY, SO LISTEN UP.
HE HIT OUR SHOP, TOO.

AND THEN...
...I HEARD MY MOM AND DAD TALKING ABOUT HIM.
WUZZ
...I REMEMBER BEING SCARED JUST SEEING HIM ACROSS THE STREET.
WUZZ

YEAH. LUNCH IS NEXT!!
THAT'S GROSS.
HE JUST IMAGINED IT.
SHIVER
JUST IMAGINE, YOU'RE BUYING JUICE...
WHAT?!
HE PEED IN OUR VENDING MACHINES.
...AND YOU STICK YOUR HAND INTO... THAT!
OH...
MY POCKETS FEEL A LITTLE HEAVIER NOW.
I WON 30,000 YEN.
I DID GOOD. ♡
KLANG KLANG
PACHINKO GRAN
MACHINE NO. 132 HAS STARTED.
JANG JANG JANG
CHAKA JANG
SLOTS 2ND FLOOR
*ABOUT $250
HEY, TAKUYA, MINORU!
THAT KID AND THE LITTLE SHRIMP.

OH, I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.
HUH?
YOU LIKE CHOCOLATE? I BROUGHT YOU SOME COOKIES AND GUM.
THE SET-UP WAS SO GOOD. THE BALLS WERE GOING IN LEFT AND RIGHT.
YOU WERE PLAYING PACHINKO?
SEIICHI ...
NO...
...SLOTS.
MINOWU WIKE ISHE CWEAM...
OH, OKAY...
MINORU!!
I CAN FEEL THE HOSTILITY.
...
WHAT CAN I SAY?
I KNOW THE...
...THINGS I DID BACK THEN WERE REALLY STUPID. I'M ASHAMED OF MYSELF. I'M NOT THAT KID ANYMORE.
BACK THEN, THERE WERE THREE THINGS I WAS AFRAID OF...
...BEING IG-NORED...
...HOS-TILITY, AND CON-TEMPT.
OF COURSE, I DON'T THINK PEOPLE WHO ARE TOO TRUSTING ARE VERY SMART, EITHER.
YES, YOU DO.
I DON'T THINK—

Author's Note Part 1

Hi, Ragawa here. I've been waiting to use this space to answer questions, and I finally got one. A reader asked what I draw my comics on. Here's my answer.

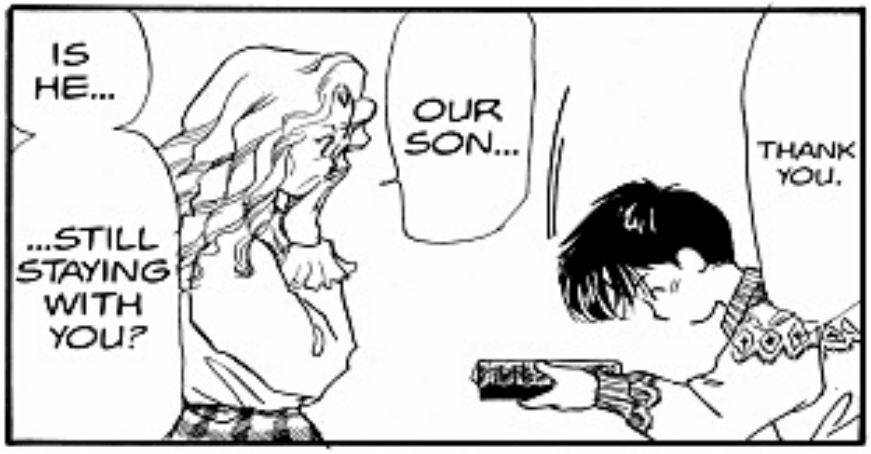
I use top-quality Sekaido-brand paper, which costs 1,300 yen ($10) for 100 sheets. I buy it at Parco in Ikebukuro, which is a real pain.

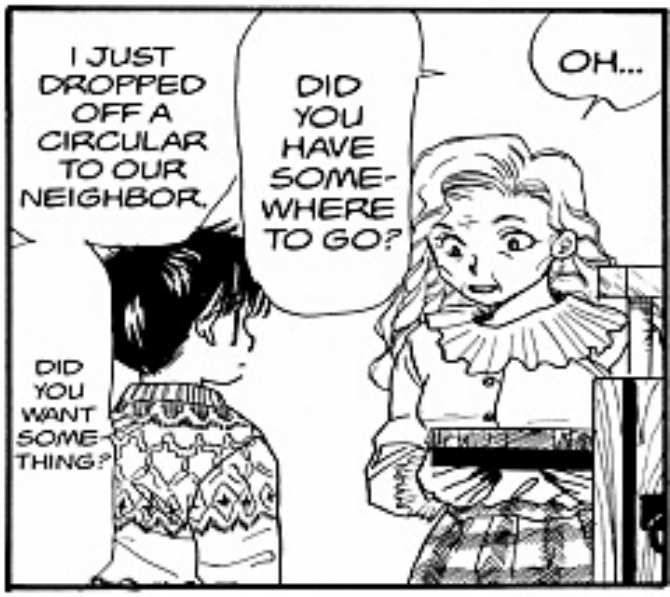
I cut my hair.

I always buy 300 sheets, which weigh a lot. I frame the panels with a 0.8 Rotring pen. I used to use a drawing pen, which gave me neat lines, but was a lot of trouble and took too long. When I started doing a series, I couldn't keep up, so I switched to a Rotring pen.

A drawing pen has a screw that controls the width of the lines and you have to pour ink into it every time you use it.

EVEN IF I CAN'T GO HOME...
IT'D BE NICE IF THEY WEREN'T MAD AT ME ANYMORE.
HE SHOULD BE MORE POLITE.
IT LOOKS LIKE ALL YOU'RE DOING IS MAKING THEM MAD.
IS THAT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE?
MINORU'S DOWN HERE.
WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME HOME?
AND WHY DON'T YOU LET THEM KNOW?
THANK YOU.
IT'S A CIRCULAR NOTICE.
TAKUYA ...
OVER HERE.
?
LET THEM KNOW? THEY CHASED ME OFF BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE TO SAY ANYTHING.
...

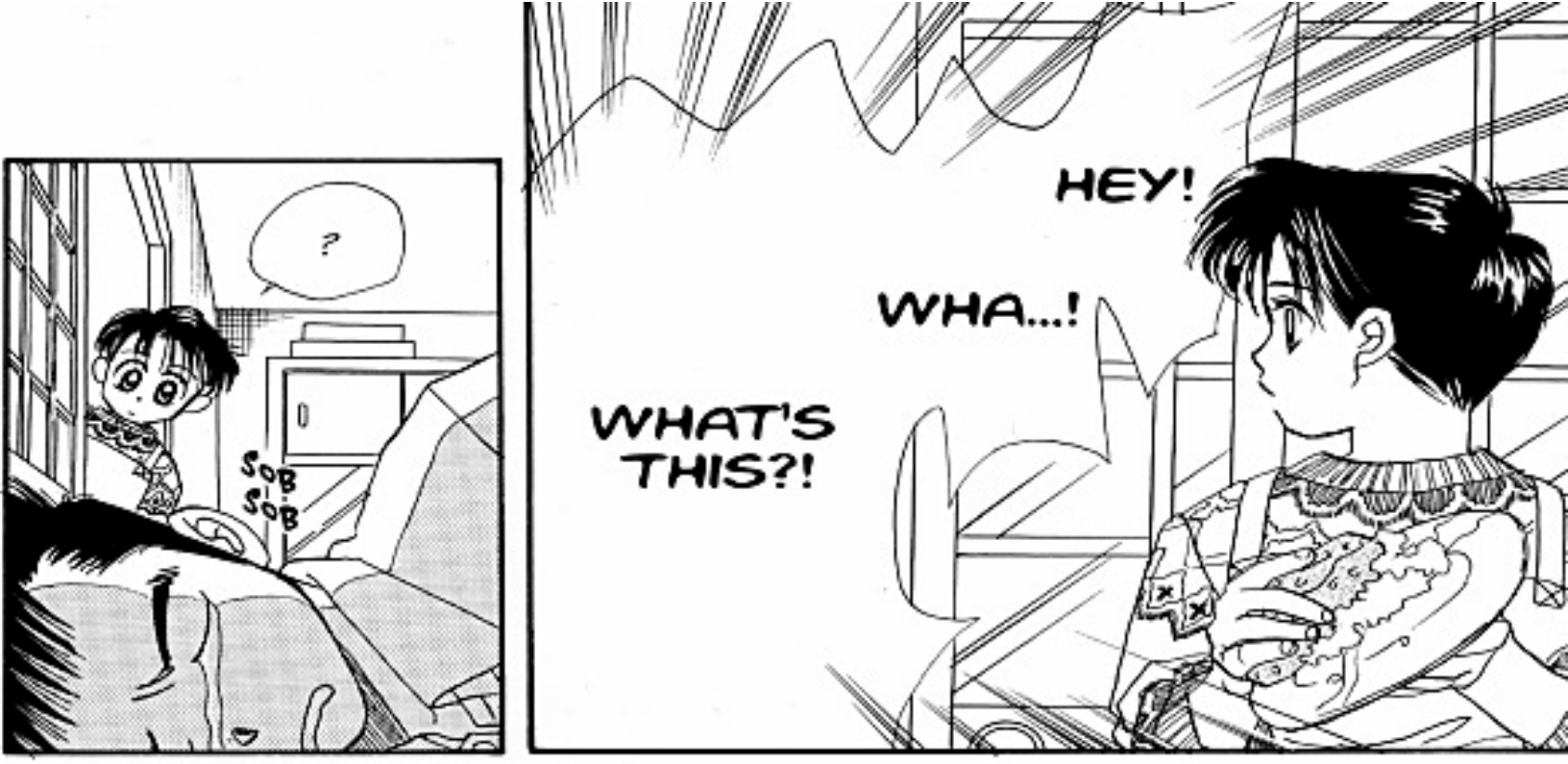




*SWEET RICE CAKES.

HAVE ALL YOU WANT.
HIS FAV-ORITE...
WHAT?
YOUR MOM MADE THEM.
WHAT?
HEH HEH HEH...
THIS IS MY FAVORITE KIND OF BEAN JAM.
ALL RIGHT!
...MIN-ORU.
HERE YOU GO...
UH...
WHUMP
YOU'RE TOO STUB-BORN!
WHATEVER!!
IT WASN'T IN MY MOUTH YET!!
YUCK! YOU TOOK IT OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!
GOO
NOW LET THEM HUMBLE THEMSELVES!
I HUMBLED MYSELF, BUT THEY THREW ME OUT.

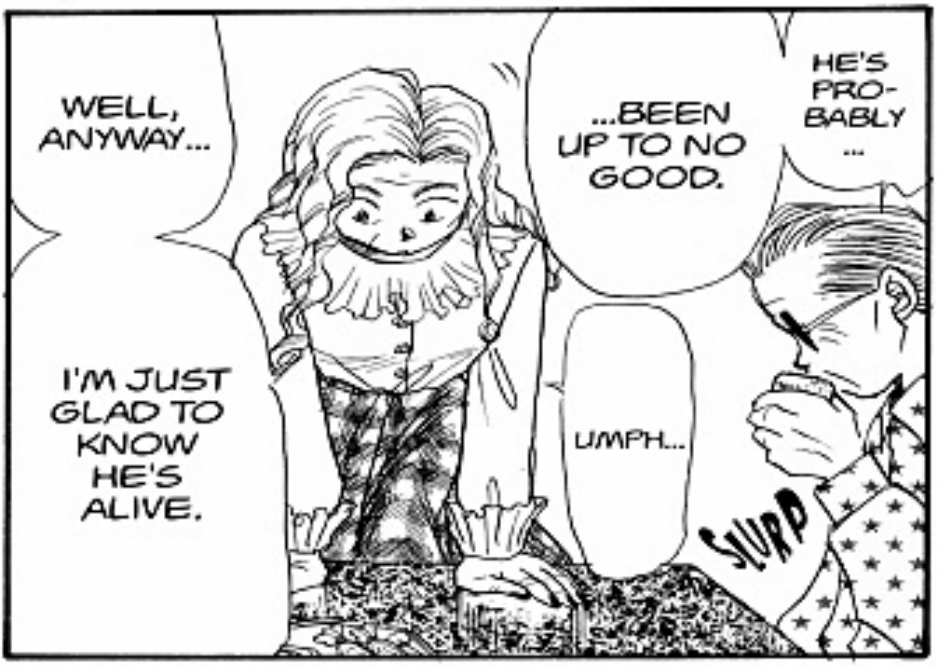
PEEK
HEY... YOU ONLY ATE THE BEAN JAM.
BWAZA, CAN I HAB ANUDDER...
HUMPH...
SHHH.
UH?
KLAK KLANK
KSHHH
TUP TUP TUP
BA-DOOM

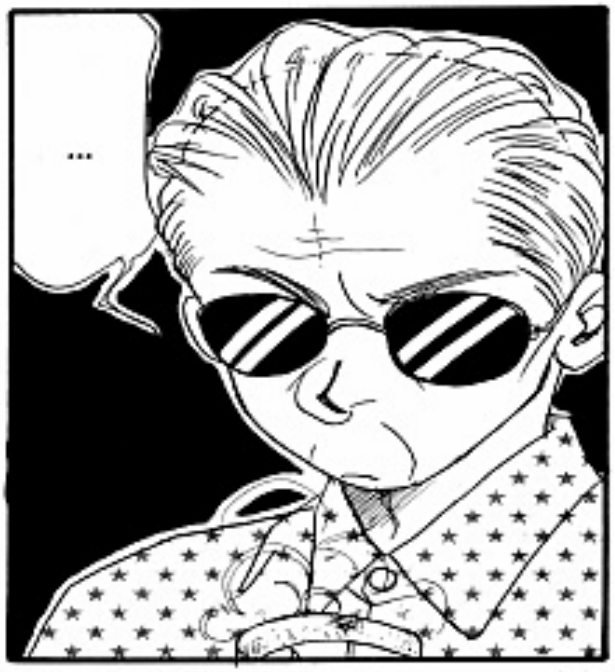

?
SOB SOB
HEY!
WHA...!
WHAT'S THIS?!

I WONDER WHAT HE'S BEEN DOING?

I'LL NEVER FORGIVE HIM!!
HE CAME BACK ON HIS OWN. HOW CAN WE TURN HIM AWAY?!

FSHH
CAN'T YOU FORGIVE SEIICHI YET?


WELL, ANYWAY...
I'M JUST GLAD TO KNOW HE'S ALIVE.
...BEEN UP TO NO GOOD.
HE'S PRO-BABLY ...
UMPH...
SURP


...

WHY DID SEIICHI...
...LEAVE HOME IN THE FIRST PLACE?
I...
I'VE WONDERED ALL THESE YEARS...
HONEY...
HUH?
SEIICHI...
YOU'RE STILL HERE?!
OH...
TONK
WHAT DID YOU SAY WHEN YOU SHOWED UP AT YOUR PARENTS' PLACE?
...HARUMI.
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK...
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE!
SOMETHING'S FUNNY AROUND HERE.
SLURP

I'M HUNGRY. IS DINNER READY?
I'M HOME.
SHAAK
HELLO!
WELL, I JUST WENT IN LIKE NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED.
SKRUSH
SKRUSH
YOU TWO STILL KICKING?
OLD MAN, OLD LADY...
OKAY.
DAD, YOU'D BETTER HEAT UP THE BATH WATER.
NO WONDER THEY THREW YOU OUT!!
GRERK
GRERK
OUCH!
DID MOM LOOK DOWN ON SEIICHI?
HUH?
FIDDLE
FIDDLE
WELL ... I GUESS IT MEANS TO LOOK DOWN ON SOME-THING.
HUH? CON-TEMPT?
DAD, WHAT'S CONTEMPT?

NO.
YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER SEIICHI?
...YOU KNOW, LIKE A TEACHER WITH AN ORNERY STUDENT. SHE PESTERED HIM BECAUSE SHE CARED ABOUT HIM.
OF COURSE NOT.
SHE WAS LIKE...
I WONDER WHAT AWFUL THINGS HE DID?
MY DAD TOLD ME YESTERDAY THAT PEOPLE USED TO CALL HIM VIOLENT SEIICHI.
...
THE TRAUMA MUST'VE BEEN TOO MUCH FOR YOU.
POOR KID.
YEAH. WHAT'S HE'S DOING?
IS THAT...
...SEIICHI?
ACROSS THE STREET!!
LOOK, GON!
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM?
I DON'T KNOW.

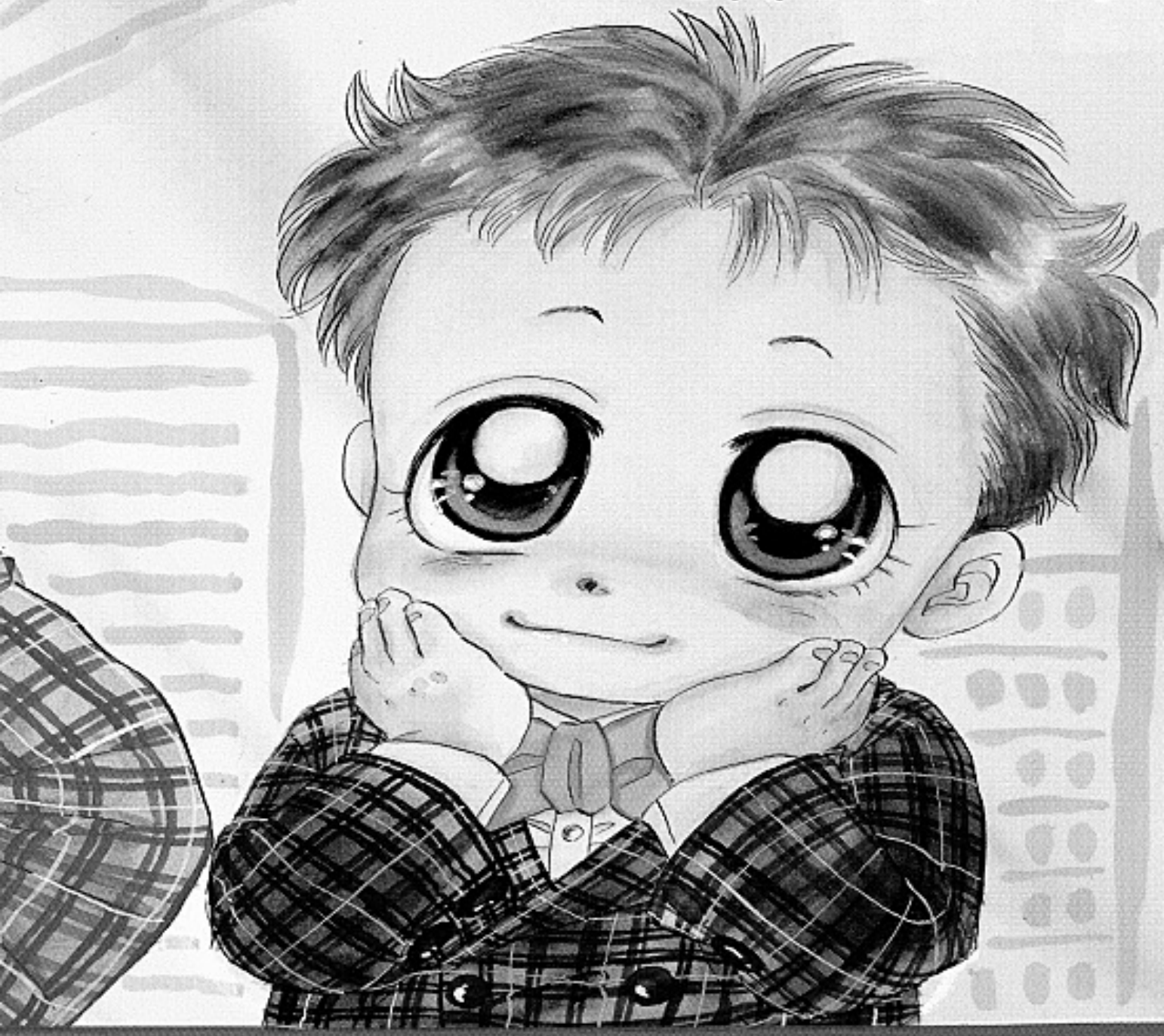
KRUNK
I WONDER WHAT.
THAT SHOP-KEEPER'S SAYING SOME-THING.
YAMAMO
KLANK
WHOA!!

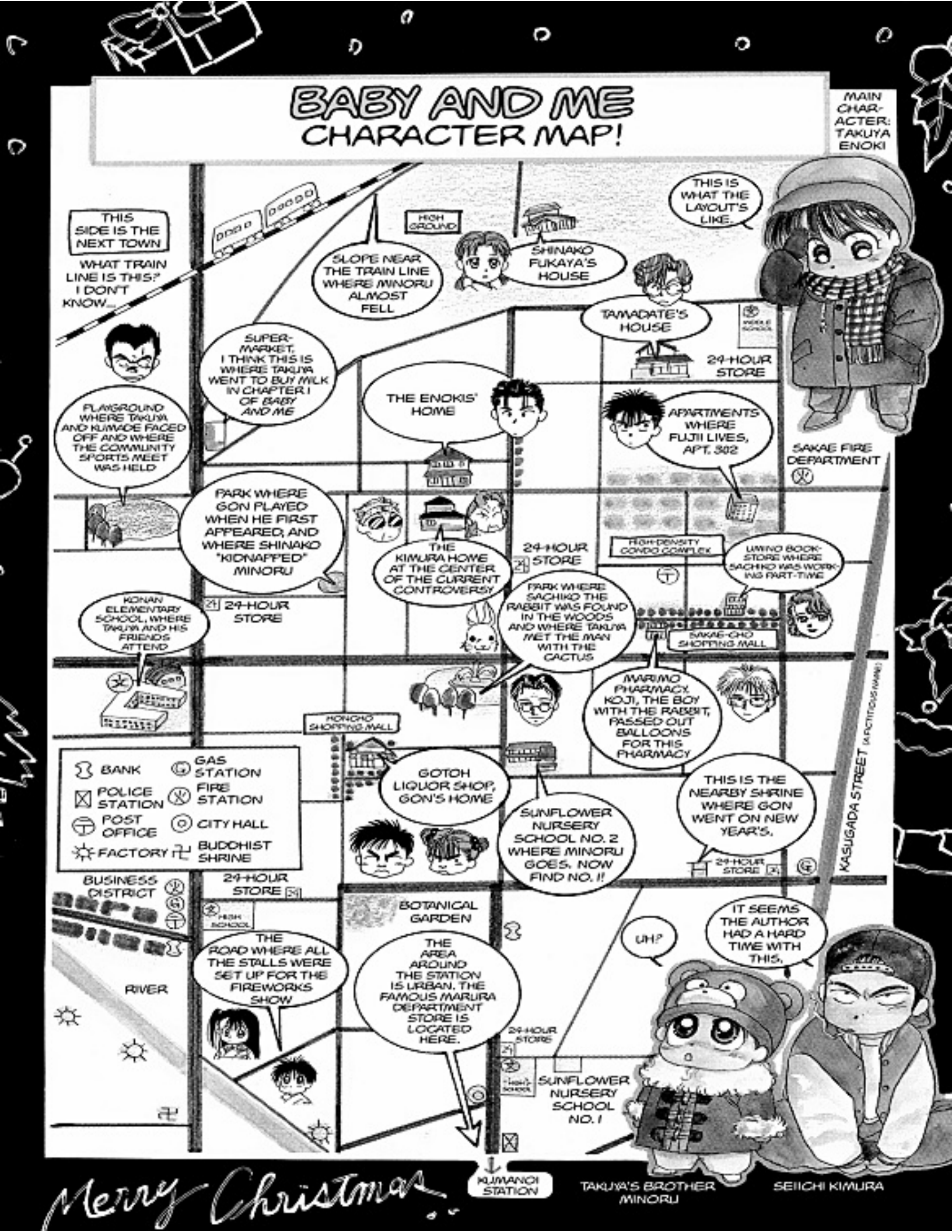
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG!
WHY DO YOU GUYS HAVE TO KEEP HASSLING ME?!
IT LOOKED LIKE THE SHOP-KEEPER STARTED IT.
...WEIRD.
"YOU GUYS"?
HUH?
HE SURE HAS A TEMPER.
THAT WAS SCARY.
BUT THAT WAS...

...IS IT TRUE THAT SEIICHI IS STAYING AT YOUR HOUSE?
TAKUYA...
HIYAKU
WHY THE PLURAL? HAVE OTHER PEOPLE BEEN YELLING AT HIM?
SHE SAID, "I DON'T HAVE ANY CIGARETTES TO SELL TO YOU!"
WHY DID HE YELL AT HER?
HERE YOU GO, FOUR DEEP-FRIED MINCEMEAT PATTIES. A SMALL ONE FOR MINORU, RIGHT?
THANK YOU.
UH...
JUST TODAY, HE YELLED AT THE WOMAN AT THE TOBACCO SHOP.
YOU'D BETTER BE CAREFUL.
YES.
...HOW SEIICHI LOOKED AT THAT MOMENT.
I COULDN'T FORGET...
I...
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT, OF COURSE.

BABY & Me

CHAPTER 23




BABY AND ME
CHARACTER MAP!
MAIN CHARACTER: TAKUYA ENOKI
THIS IS WHAT THE LAYOUT'S LIKE.
THIS SIDE IS THE NEXT TOWN
WHAT TRAIN LINE IS THIS? I DON'T KNOW...
HIGH GROUND
SLOPE NEAR THE TRAIN LINE WHERE MINORU ALMOST FELL
SHINAKO FUKAYA'S HOUSE
TAMADATE'S HOUSE
24-HOUR STORE
SUPER-MARKET, I THINK THIS IS WHERE TAKUYA WENT TO BUY MILK IN CHAPTER 1 OF BABY AND ME
THE ENOKIS' HOME
APARTMENTS WHERE FUJII LIVES, APT. 302
SAKAE FIRE DEPARTMENT
PLAYGROUND WHERE TAKUYA AND KUMADE FACED OFF AND WHERE THE COMMUNITY SPORTS MEET WAS HELD
PARK WHERE GON PLAYED WHEN HE FIRST APPEARED, AND WHERE SHINAKO "KIDNAPPED" MINORU
THE KIMURA HOME AT THE CENTER OF THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY
24-HOUR STORE
HIGH-DENSITY CONDO COMPLEX
UMINO BOOK-STORE WHERE SACHIKO WAS WORKING PART-TIME
KONAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WHERE TAKUYA AND HIS FRIENDS ATTEND
24-HOUR STORE
PARK WHERE SACHIKO THE RABBIT WAS FOUND IN THE WOODS AND WHERE TAKUYA MET THE MAN WITH THE CACTUS
SAKAE-CHO SHOPPING MALL
MARIMO PHARMACY. KOJI, THE BOY WITH THE RABBIT, PASSED OUT BALLOONS FOR THIS PHARMACY
HONCHO SHOPPING MALL
BANK
GAS STATION
POLICE STATION
FIRE STATION
POST OFFICE
CITY HALL
FACTORY
BUDDHIST SHRINE
GOTOH LIQUOR SHOP, GON'S HOME
SUNFLOWER NURSERY SCHOOL NO. 2 WHERE MINORU GOES. NOW FIND NO. 1!
THIS IS THE NEARBY SHRINE WHERE GON WENT ON NEW YEAR'S.
KASUGADA STREET (A FICTITIOUS NAME)
24-HOUR STORE
BUSINESS DISTRICT
24-HOUR STORE
HIGH SCHOOL
BOTANICAL GARDEN
RIVER
THE ROAD WHERE ALL THE STALLS WERE SET UP FOR THE FIREWORKS SHOW
THE AREA AROUND THE STATION IS URBAN. THE FAMOUS MARUIRA DEPARTMENT STORE IS LOCATED HERE.
UH?
IT SEEMS THE AUTHOR HAD A HARD TIME WITH THIS.
24-HOUR STORE
HIGH SCHOOL
SUNFLOWER NURSERY SCHOOL NO. 1
KUMANOI STATION
TAKUYA'S BROTHER MINORU
SEIICHI KIMURA
Merry Christmas

WOOOOO
BRR!
IT'S C-COLD!!
WOOO
C-C-COLD.
DARN. MY NOSE IS RUN-NING.
SNIFF
KUAK
YOU'RE LATE!!
YOU ARE LATE.
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK

HE LEFT HOME SIX YEARS AGO, BUT RECENTLY RETURNED.
I'LL ASK MY DAD TO LET YOU COME IN EVEN IF WE'RE NOT AT HOME.
SEIICHI IS THE ONLY SON OF MR. AND MRS. KIMURA, WHO LIVE ACROSS THE STREET.
SNIFF
ABOUT TWO HOURS! HURRY UP AND LET ME IN, WILL YOU?!
HAVE YOU BEEN HERE LONG?
I HAD SOME SHOPPING TO DO.
SNIFF
HE'S BACK, BUT HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO MAKE PEACE WITH HIS PARENTS.
SO HE'S BEEN STAYING WITH US FOR ABOUT A WEEK NOW.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
MAYBE.
SHHAK
HARUMI WOULD NEVER GO FOR THAT.
...
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING BY THEN...
FSS
FSS
FSS
FSS
CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE.

WHO'S GOING TO BE SAD?
OH...
...IT'S GONNA BE SAD.
OR...
WOOSH
BINK
UH?
I WAS JUST WONDER-ING IF YOU HAVE A LUMP ON THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
...IS YOUR HEAD ALL RIGHT?
TAKUYA
...
...
HUH?
...YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME.
THEN THAT'S NOT THE REASON...
I DON'T FEEL ONE.
HERE?
COCOA
WHY? ARE YOU SAY-ING I'M...
...STUPID?
NO!!

I WAS TRYING TO SCARE YOU BY THROWING IT NEAR YOUR HEAD.
BUT MY HAND SLIPPED AND IT WHACKED YOUR HEAD PRETTY HARD.
THE REA-SON?
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D FORGOTTEN ME...
...'CAUSE I HIT YOU IN THE HEAD WITH A YO-YO YEARS AGO.
BY THE WAY...
...DO YOU KNOW WHY YOUR PARENTS GOT MARRIED?
IT KNOCKED YOU OUT COLD.
HARUMI AND YUKAKO JUST ABOUT SKINNED ME ALIVE.
IT WAS BECAUSE HARUMI...
...KNOCKED UP YOUR MOTHER.
MINORU

WHEEE
OH...
THE WATER'S BOILING.
WHEEE
WHEEE
...
PUFF
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
SEIICHI USES A LOT OF WORDS THAT I DON'T KNOW.
PLUP PLUP
I'M A REAL JERK, HUH?
MINO-RU...
SHWUMP
OH!
KNOCKED HER UP?
GO HOME AND APOLO-GIZE!

ARE YOU PLANNING ON SPONGING OFF OF US FOREVER?!
NO WAY.
THEY CAN'T MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.
GO OVER THERE AND BEG FOR FORGIVE-NESS.
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST FORGET IT.
HUH?
GLARE
I KNOW ONE THING YOU DID.
DON'T TALK LIKE THAT! TAKUYA'LL GET THE WRONG IDEA.
...AFTER EVERY-THING YOU DID?
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ...
I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD HAVE COOLED OFF AFTER SIX YEARS...
...BUT NOTHING'S CHANGED.

I NEVER DID ANYTHING LIKE THAT!!
HUH?
WHAT?
WHAT'S THAT?
THEY SAY YOU PEED IN SOME VENDING MACHINES.
BUT I WOULDN'T DOUBT THAT SOMEBODY FRAMED YOU.
TMP TMP
...
EVERYBODY'S JUST MAKING ME THE SCAPEGOAT.
WELL, IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, ISN'T IT?
HOLD ON.
UH... HARUMI...
YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO MAKE ENEMIES.

I DID STUFF TO THEIR BIKES.
OVER TIME THERE WAS A LOT OF BAD BLOOD BETWEEN US.
BUT I ALWAYS DUCKED THEM, AND THEY COULD NEVER CATCH ME. THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THEY DID THOSE NASTY THINGS.
I DIDN'T DO MUCH, JUST BENT THEIR LICENSE PLATES, THREW AWAY THEIR COOLANT, KNOCKED OVER THEIR BIKES... MINOR STUFF.
TAKUYA, I DON'T KNOW WHO TOLD YOU THAT, BUT I DIDN'T DO IT!!
IT WAS PROBABLY THOSE DELIN-QUENTS THAT HATED ME.
AND SPLASHED RED PAINT ALL OVER THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD.
UM...
...AREN'T YOU FEELING WELL?
SEIICHI?
I HAVE NOTHING...
...TO SELL TO YOU.

Author's Note Part 2

A Rotring pen has ink in it, more or less like a ball-point pen or a felt-tip pen. I use a 100-yen (80 cents) 0.5 mm HB pencil to do my rough drafts. Of course, some people use a 0.3 mm or an H or a B pencil. Whatever works is fine.

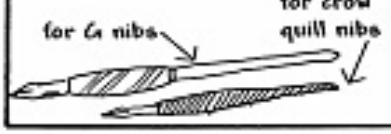
I use just two pen nibs, a G nib and a crow quill nib. Both are from Zebra.

The G nib can be used for hard or soft lines. I use it for the main lines in my characters.

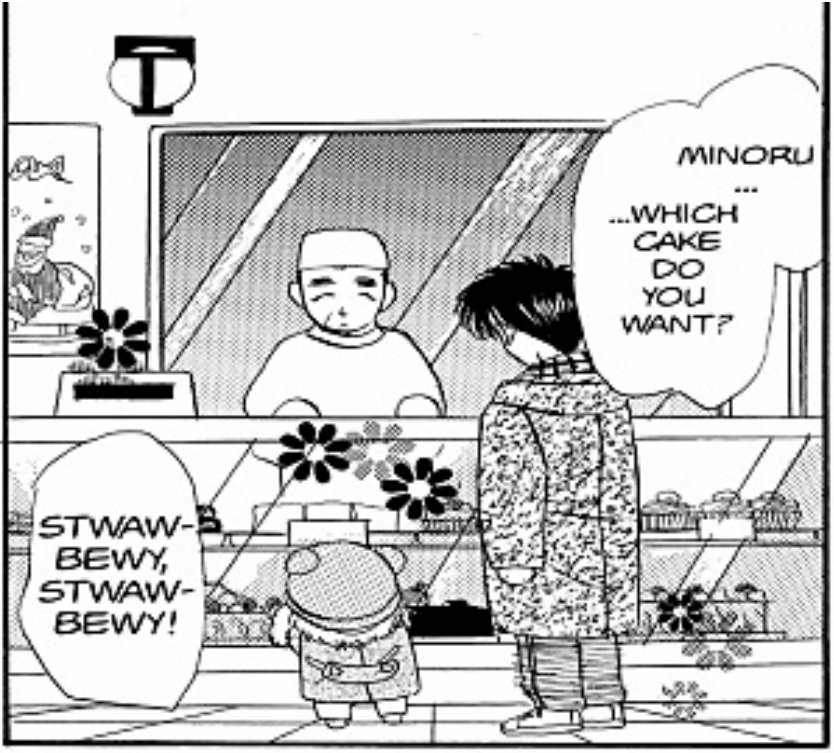
The crow quill nib allows you to draw fine lines. I use this for the details of faces, hair, shadows, and backgrounds. Until I got used to this nib, it would catch on the paper and I hated it.

Other artists use things like spoon pens and book-keeping pens, so I suggest you buy one of each kind of pen and try them out to see what works best for you. You shouldn't just do what I do without trying other stuff.

By the way, for a while I didn't realize that the G nib and the crow quill nib took different holders.



OUR FOOL OF A SON HAS DONE SOME UNFORGIVABLE THINGS...
...EVERYONE HAD FORGOTTEN ME LIKE YOU DID.
I WISH...
...PLEASE FORGIVE US.
BUT...
HUH?
JINGLE BELLS.
JINGLE BELLS
WUZZ
WUZZ
YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES YOU SAY SOME STRANGE THINGS.
IT WOULD BE WEIRD IF EVERYONE IN TOWN LOST THEIR MEMORIES.


MINORU ...
...WHICH CAKE DO YOU WANT?
STWAW-BEWY, STWAW-BEWY!

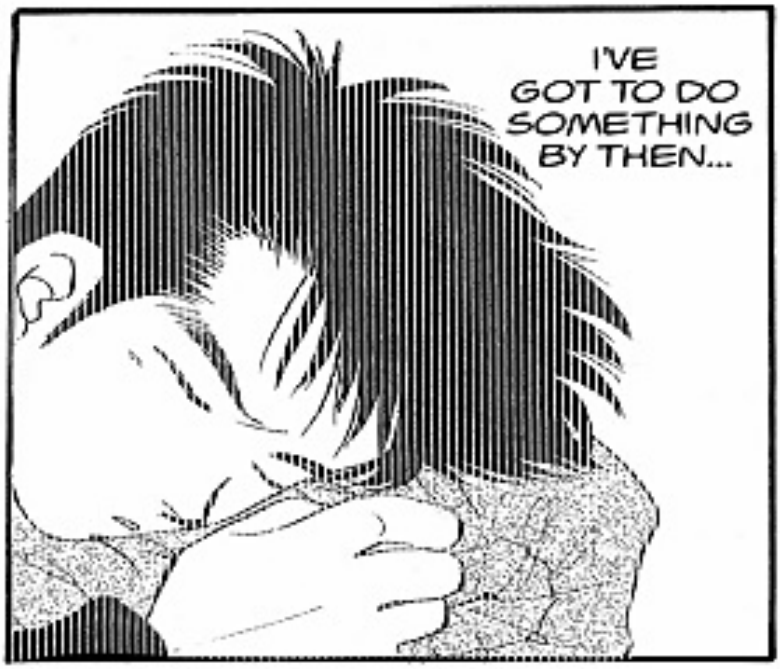
STARE

CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE.

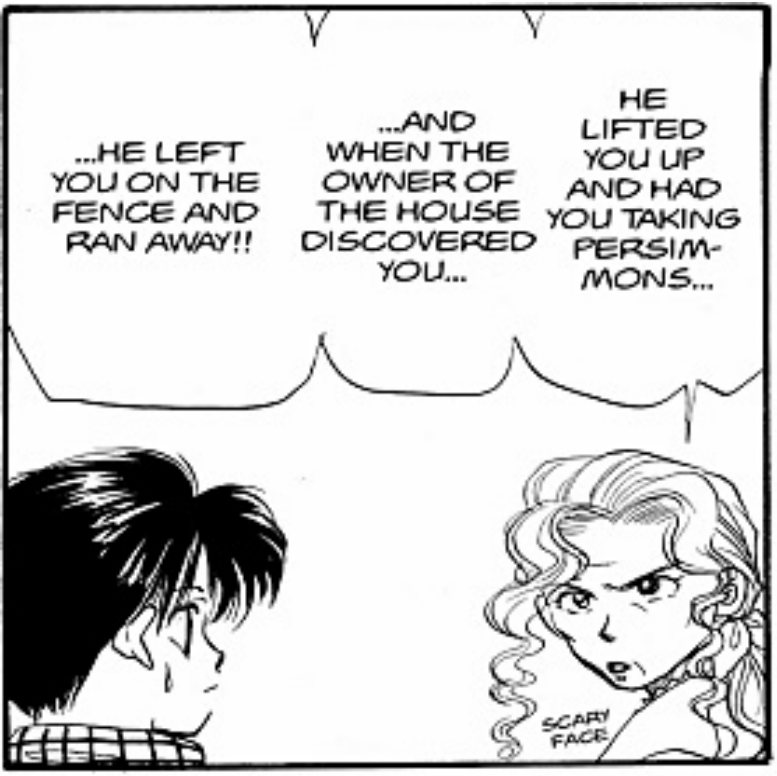
OKAY, I'VE ORDERED THE APPLE CIDER FROM GON'S PARENTS, SO THAT'S DONE.
CAKE, CAKE...
SKWEEK

I'LL PAY FOR IT NOW.
OKAY, I'LL PICK IT UP TOMOR-ROW, THE 25TH.
SURE.

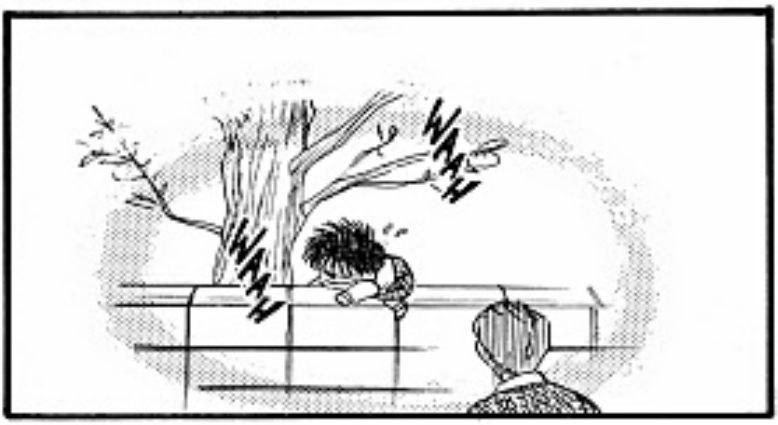
CHRISTMAS IS TOMORROW. I WONDER WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO...
TAKUYA-

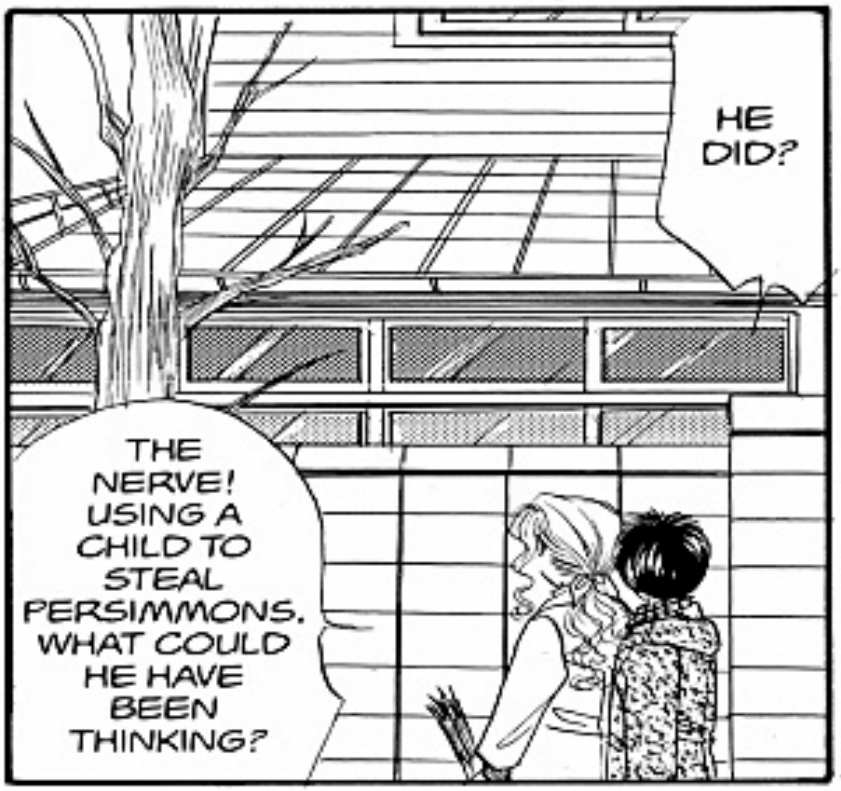

I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING BY THEN...

...THAT WAS OUR FAULT.
UH, WELL... SEIICHI DIDN'T EAT ANY, BUT...
THAT'S OKAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.
WE ATE THEM ALL UP.
YOU'RE WELCOME. DID MY SON HAVE ANY?
OH, THANK YOU FOR THE OHAGI.
WHY DON'T WE WALK HOME TOGETHER?
ARE YOU DONE WITH ALL YOUR SHOPPING?
OH, HERE ARE SOME GAME TICKETS THE SHOPS ARE GIVING OUT. WHY DON'T YOU USE THEM LATER?
I SEE.
NOT YET. TOMORROW'S OUR LAST DAY.
ONE OF THE PRIZES IS A BEAR.
IS SCHOOL OUT FOR WINTER BREAK?
BUT IT'S TRUE.
THE TRUTH IS, MINORU ATE THEM ALL UP.
...HOW OUR FOOLISH SON ABANDONED YOU HERE.
EVERY TIME I PASS THIS HOUSE I REMEMBER...
OH...


...HE LEFT YOU ON THE FENCE AND RAN AWAY!!
...AND WHEN THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE DISCOVERED YOU...
HE LIFTED YOU UP AND HAD YOU TAKING PERSIM-MONS...
SCARY FACE

...

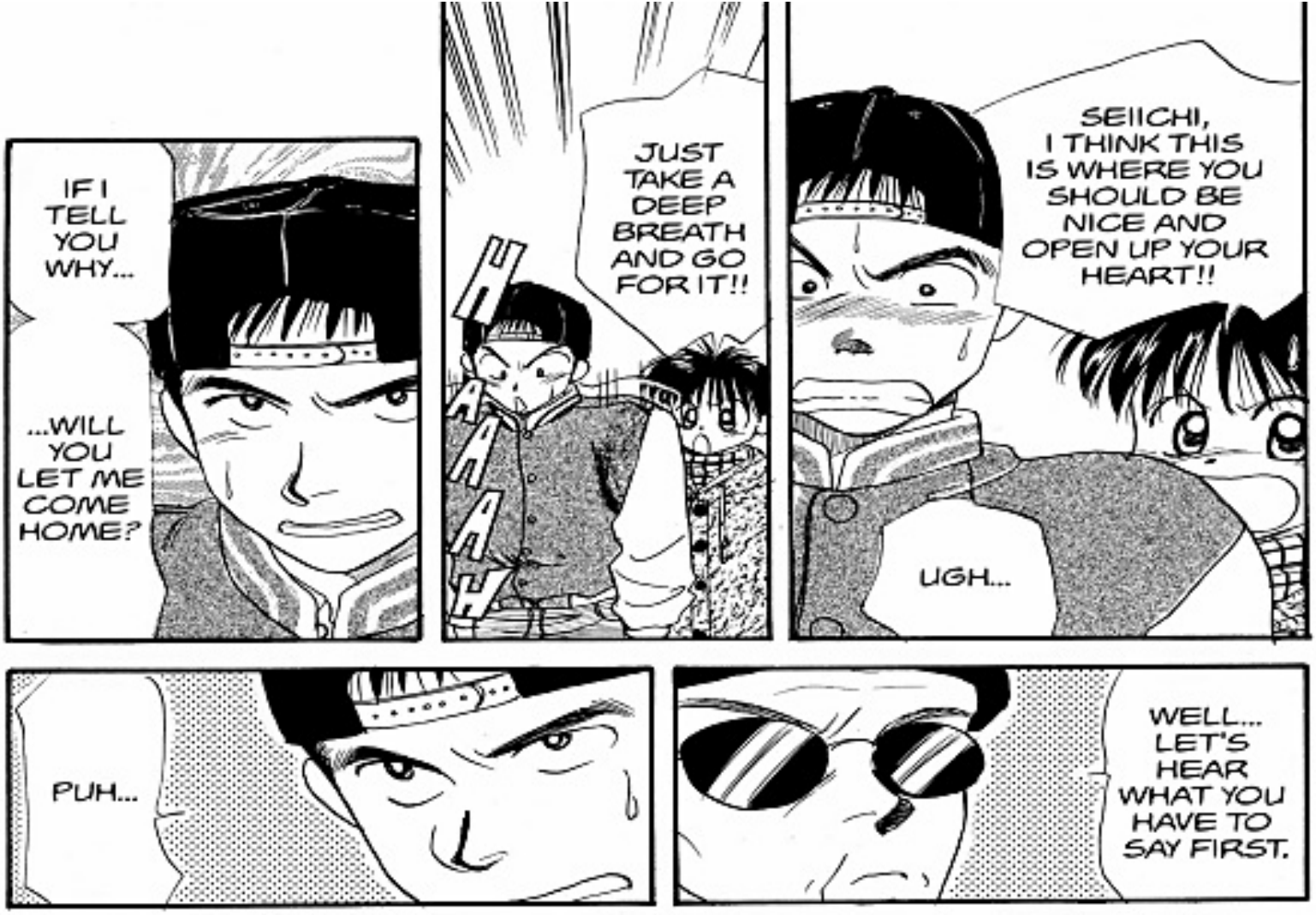

WAAH
WAAH


HE DID?
THE NERVE! USING A CHILD TO STEAL PERSIMMONS. WHAT COULD HE HAVE BEEN THINKING?

WHOOF

HE NEVER DID ANYTHING WORTH-WHILE.
OH.

...TELL THAT OLD JERK...
WHY DON'T YOU...
SEIICHI, IT'S PAST TIME THAT YOU SAT DOWN AND TALKED IT OUT WITH YOUR FATHER.
GRR... OLD LADY...
OH, SEIICHI. YOU'RE STILL STAYING AT TAKUYA'S HOUSE?
...AN OLD JERK?!
OLD JERK? WHO ARE YOU CALLING...
WHAT DOES MR. KIMURA DO FOR A LIVING?
WHY DON'T YOU DRESS LIKE A NORMAL OFFICE WORKER?
OLD MAN ...
OH. YOU'RE HOME EARLY, DEAR.
...OF TALKING ANYTHING OUT WITH A FOOL LIKE YOU!!
I HAVE NO INTEN-TION...
WELL, YOU SEE...
UH...
YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR SIX YEARS. WHY HAVE YOU COME BACK NOW?!


IF I TELL YOU WHY...
...WILL YOU LET ME COME HOME?
JUST TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND GO FOR IT!!
AAAH
SEIICHI, I THINK THIS IS WHERE YOU SHOULD BE NICE AND OPEN UP YOUR HEART!!
UGH...
PUH...
WELL... LET'S HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY FIRST.

SNAP

PLEASE LEND ME SOME MONEY.

UPERCUT
WHAM
YOU IDIOT!

I'M PACKING!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

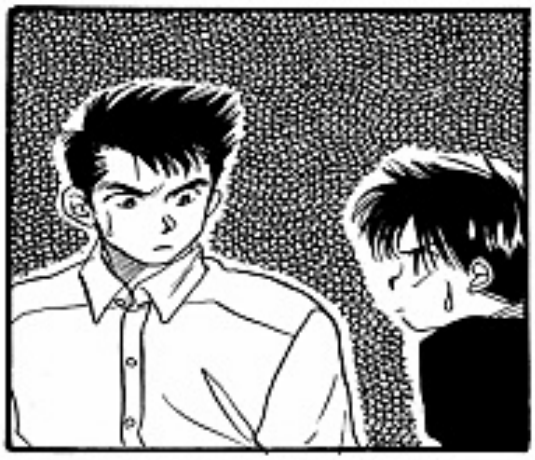
SEIICHI ...

HUH?
HAVEN'T YOU CAUSED US ENOUGH TROUBLE?!
PAT PAT
TMP TMP TMP

ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?!

BUT...

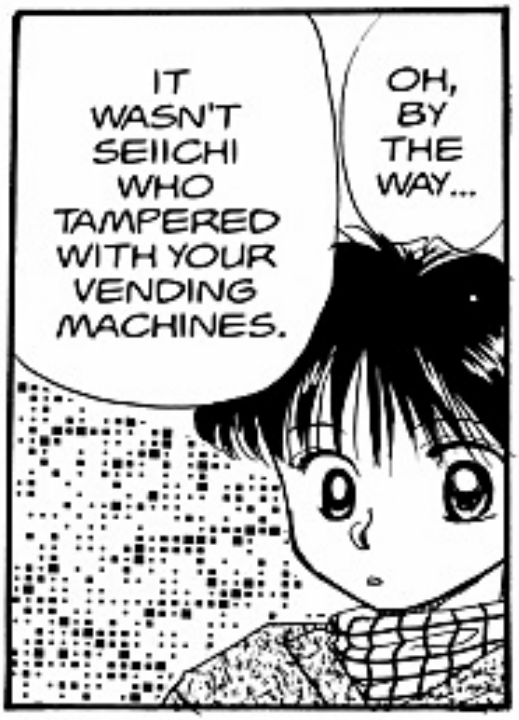
I...
I'M LEAVING TOMOR-ROW.



...STILL HAVE THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT YOU.
AND THE PEOPLE AT THE SHOPPING MALL...
IF YOU DON'T RETURN NOW...
...YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SPEND NEW YEAR'S OR OBON* WITH THEM.

*OBON IS A BUDDHIST HOLIDAY.

I'M NOT AS TOUGH AS I SEEM.



I BEG YOUR PARDON.
I TOLD HIM TO STAY THERE UNTIL I GOT HOME, BUT...
WHO KNOWS?
TAP TAP
6:00...
WE FINISHED WORK SURPRISINGLY EARLY.
I HOPE SEIICHI'S THERE.
WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
WUZZ
KUMANOI STA N
NO, IT'S EASY.
IS IT HARD TO FIND ON FOOT?
YOU COULD WALK THERE.
WHICH BUS SHOULD I TAKE TO GET TO THIS ADDRESS?
PICK HER UP?
THAT ADDRESS IS ACROSS THE STREET FROM MY HOUSE.
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO PICK ME UP...
I... I'LL WALK YOU THERE.
OH.

HEY... I'M OVER HERE.
OH GOOD! LET'S GO!
KENJI! DO YOU KNOW THIS GIRL?!
WHOA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
WHAP
YOU KNOW SEIICHI?
ARE YOU...A FRIEND OF SEIICHI?
NO WAY.
WIZZ
KLAK KLAK
WIZZ
MAS LOTTERY
HUH?!
I USUALLY WEAR THESE.
WEAR THEM ...
OH? HOW DID YOU KNOW?
ARE YOU NEAR-SIGHTED?
ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO, TAICHI...
IS SHE SEIICHI'S GIRL-FRIEND?

AS LONG AS I'M THE SON OF A LIQUOR STORE OWNER ...
...I'LL NEVER HAVE ANY FREEDOM.
SOB ...
LIQUOR
THUD
AZAHI BEER
ALLEY OOP!
KLANK KLANK
I WISH I COULD WIN THAT.
A BEH...
OH, ONE OF THE PRIZES IS A MOUNTAIN BIKE.
VUZZ
VUZZ
...
WHUP
LIQUOR
HUH?
TWP TWP
WHOA! HE REEKS OF BOOZE. THIS IS BAD!!
UGH...

AND WE HAVE TAICHI NOW.
...AL-THOUGH WE DIDN'T HAVE A CERE-MONY.
NOT JUST LIVING TOGETHER, WE'RE MARRIED...
BA BA
YOU AND SEIICHI ARE... L-LIVING TOGETHER?
SO... SO...
TAICHI, MEET YOUR GRANDMA AND GRANDPA.
BA BA
MR. KIMURA, TAKE A LOOK AT THE BABY'S FACE.
THIS BEAUTY IS MARRIED TO SEIICHI?! IS IT TRUE?
SHE'S GOT A PRETTY FACE, AND CURVES... WOW.
I DIDN'T KNOW!!
SEIICHI'S M-MARRIED?!
BA

ISN'T SEIICHI HERE? HE HASN'T CONTACTED ME FOR A WHILE.
AND I'VE GOT TO TELL THE RESTAURANT WHERE HE WORKS WHETHER HE'S ON VACATION OR QUITTING.
I DON'T KNOW!
POOR THING... WHAT SHOULD I DO, HARUMI?!
WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE TAKEN AFTER HIS MOTHER?
THAT FACE!! THERE'S NO DOUBT!! HE'S SEIICHI'S SON!!
DOOM
OH? THEN I WONDER WHO HE WAS THINKING... ...OF BORROWING THE MONEY FROM?
WIP
WHAT?! S-SURGERY?!
AND WE NEED TO DECIDE ABOUT TAICHI'S SURGERY SOON TOO.
MR. KIMURA! MRS. KIMURA!
ON HIS LUNGS. THEY SAY THE SURGERY SHOULD FIX IT.
SEIICHI TOLD YOU ABOUT IT, DIDN'T HE?

WHAT?!
AND HE HAD A MEAN LOOK IN HIS EYE!
HE'S DRUNK!!
TMP TMP
WHAT IS IT? OH, IT'S THE GOTOH BOY.
SEIICHI'S AT THE SHOPPING MALL!!
HUFF HUFF
AND?
HE SMELLS LIKE BOOZE.
KLUNK
CHRISTMAS LOTTERY
I'M SORRY ...
IT'S NOT SO EASY, IS IT MINORU?
UNH-UH.
IT'S A PARTY CRACKER.
HERE'S A CONSOLATION PRIZE.

HEY.
S-SEIICHI?
HE'S DRUNK.
WUZZ
WUZZ
HEY! OUTTA MY WAY, YOU GUYS!!
SEIICHI ...
I AIN'T GOT NO HOME.
SEIICHI, LET'S GO HOME.
WOBBLE

NO...
WHAP
HEY!! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
NO...
WUZZ
I'LL GET THE PO-LICE.
WUZZ
!!
UH-OH...
OKAY!!
WHAP
GIM-ME THIS!
GASP
WUZZ
WUZZ
I HAVE A BAD FEELING...
IT'S A SCENE...
HUFF
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
HUFF

BUT STILL YOU PEOPLE TREAT ME LIKE A CRIMINAL!
...
...MY ATTITUDE WAS BAD...
WELL, IT'S TRUE...
DAD... MOM...
IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
WHY ARE YOU KOW-TOWING?
I'M SORRY.
...BUT ...
I...
KEEN
...HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG!!

I WANT ...
...TO COME HOME.
PLEASE ...
STOP IT.
SNIFF
SEIICHI ...
SEIICHI ...
BOO.
WE DON'T HAVE TO LIVE HERE.
LET'S GO HOME.
TOMOKO, TAICHI...
BA

COME BACK HOME.

I...MY PARENTS AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS TOWN ALL HATE ME.

I'M SORRY.

I TOLD YOU, I DON'T CARE. WE CAN GO BACK TO OUR OLD PLACE.

...FOR YOU AND TAICHI TO LIVE HERE.

IT COULD BE ROUGH...

TO THINK THAT I'D GET...

...A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW...

...AND A GRANDSON ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

I'LL GIVE YOU THE MONEY FOR MY GRANDSON'S SURGERY.

YOUR ROOM IS JUST THE WAY YOU LEFT IT.

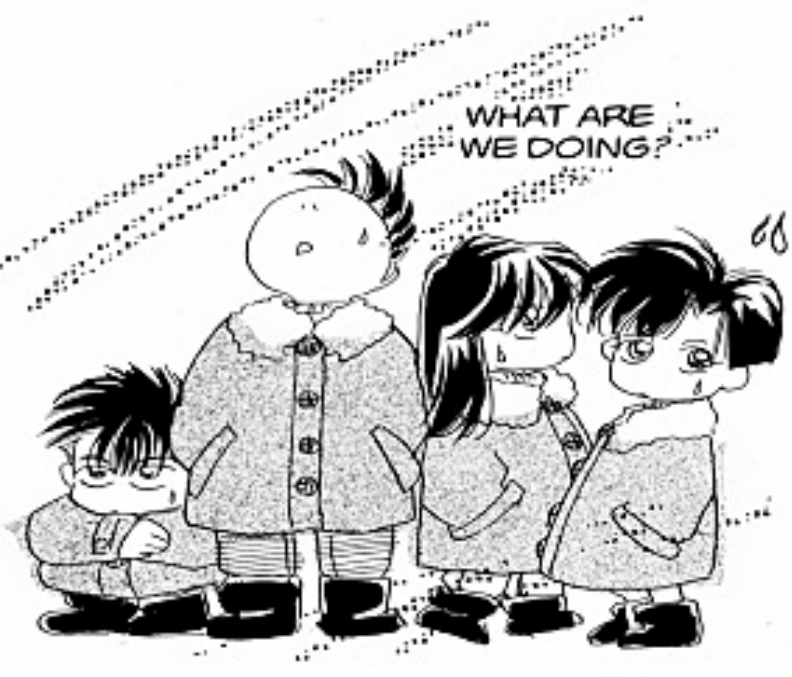
COME HOME.

SOB ...
NOTHING COULD MAKE ME HAPPIER.
PUT YOUR GLASSES ON!
OH, SEIICHI!
MI-NORU!
AAGH!!
ISN'T IT GREAT, TAICHI!!
SHWG
THANKS.
YEAH?
TAKU-YA...
SORT OF EMBAR-RASSING, ISN'T IT?
WE'RE FINALLY GRAND-PARENTS!
KYAK KYAK
AHH
GIGGLE

WHERE'S DINNER? I'M STARVING.
MRS. KIMURA AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW GOT ALONG SURPRISINGLY WELL.
AND THEN... WELL, YOU KNOW SEIICHI... IS THAT RIGHT?
...THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN...
...SOFTENED A LITTLE TOWARD SEIICHI.
DON'T SMOKE SO MUCH. IT'S BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH.
I KNOW, BUT I CAN'T QUIT.
HUH?
AFTER THAT...
AND ANOTHER THING...
WHEN I LEFT HERE, THE LAST PEOPLE I SAW WERE YUKAKO AND YOU.
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT, BUT MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME.
WHY?
DAD, WHEN I WAS LITTLE, WHAT WAS I LIKE?
WELL, YOU WERE VERY TRUSTING. YOU BELIEVED WHATEVER PEOPLE TOLD YOU. ♡
YOU WERE SO TRUSTING...
...ALMOST LIKE A MORON.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'D FORGET YOU THAT EASILY!!
AHH!
GOO...
WHEN I COME BACK...
I'M GOING TO BE A NEW MAN.
SO FORGET THE OLD ME!!

Chapter 24

BABY & Me



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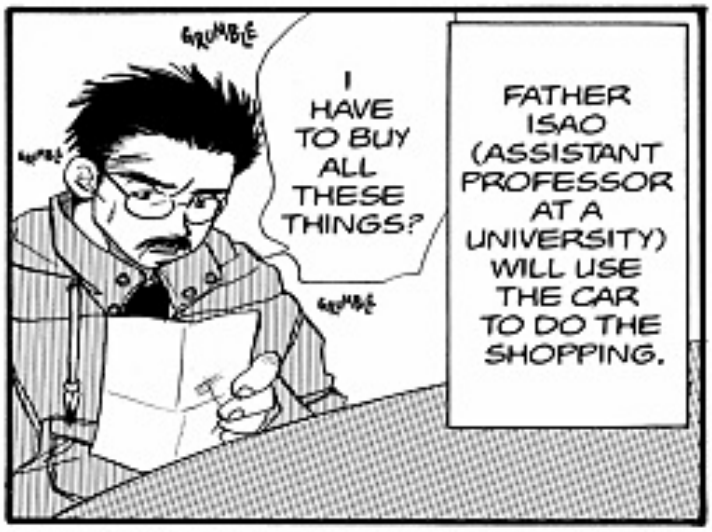
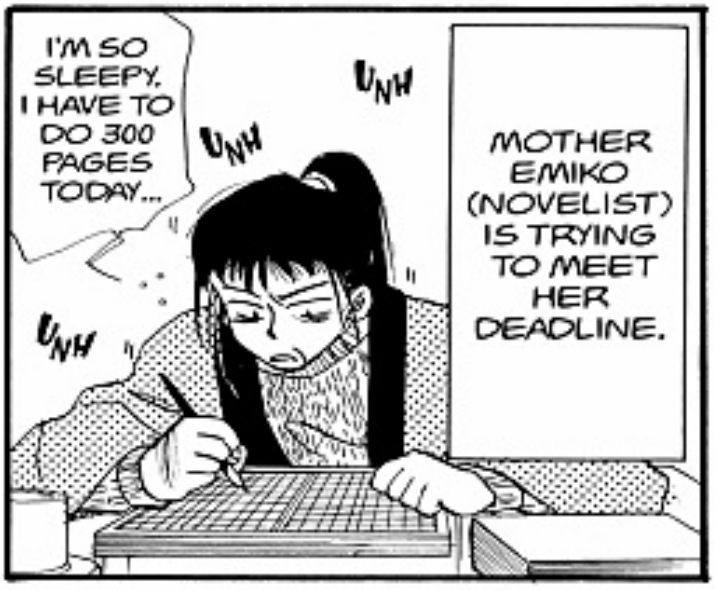
DECEMBER 31, NEW YEAR'S EVE...

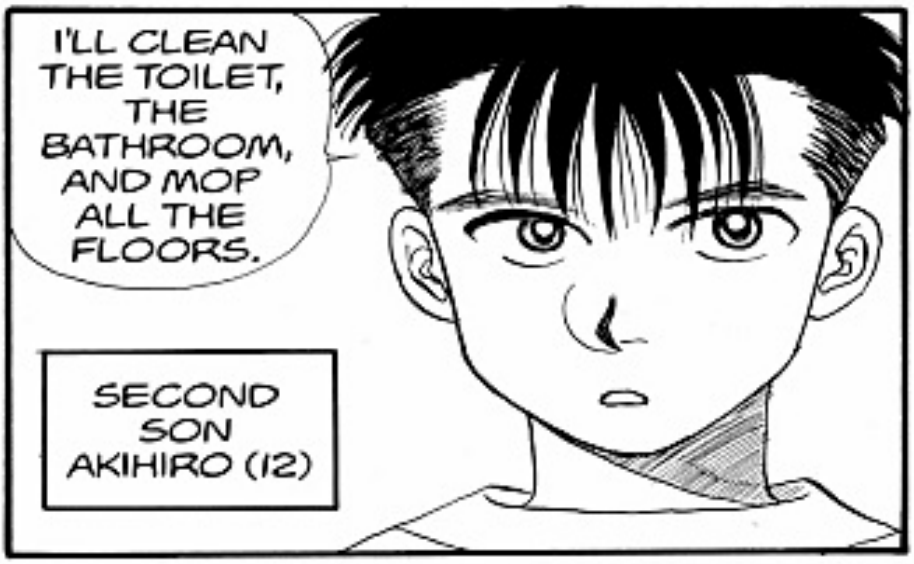
FUJII

MASAKI	ICHIKA	AKIHIRO	ASAKO	TOMOYA	AKEMI	EMIKO	ISAO

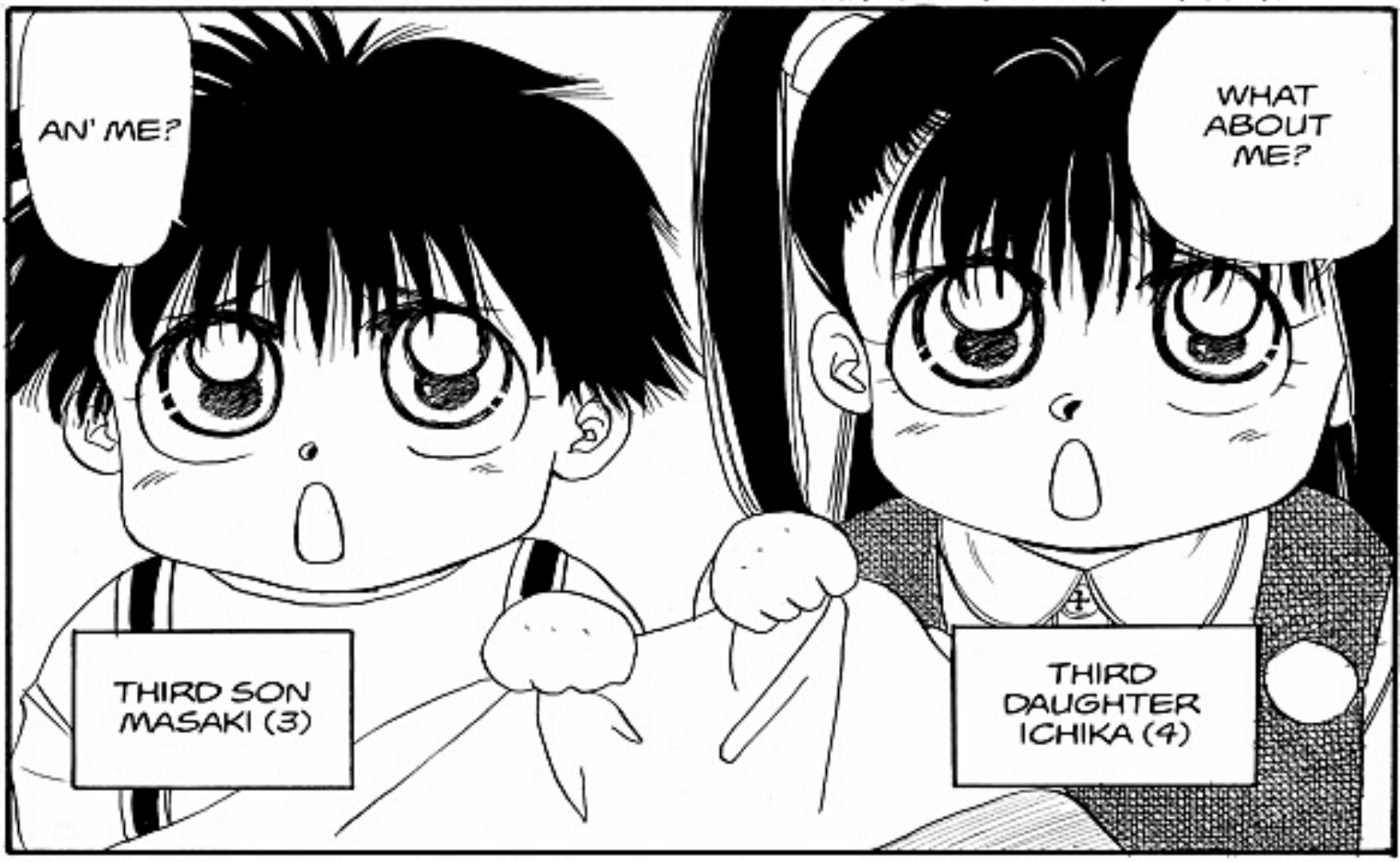
IT'S TIME FOR THE FUJIIS' ANNUAL YEAR-END HOUSE CLEANING.


GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
I HAVE TO BUY ALL THESE THINGS?
FATHER ISAO (ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT A UNIVERSITY) WILL USE THE CAR TO DO THE SHOPPING.



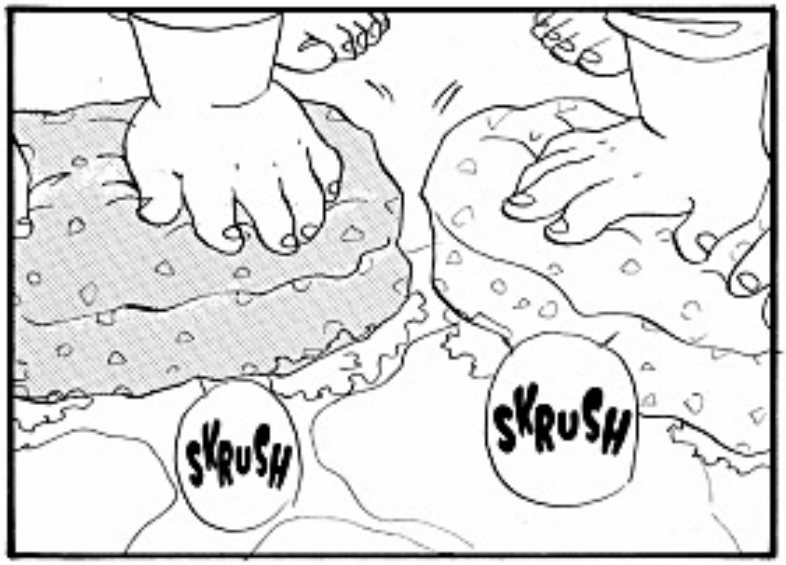


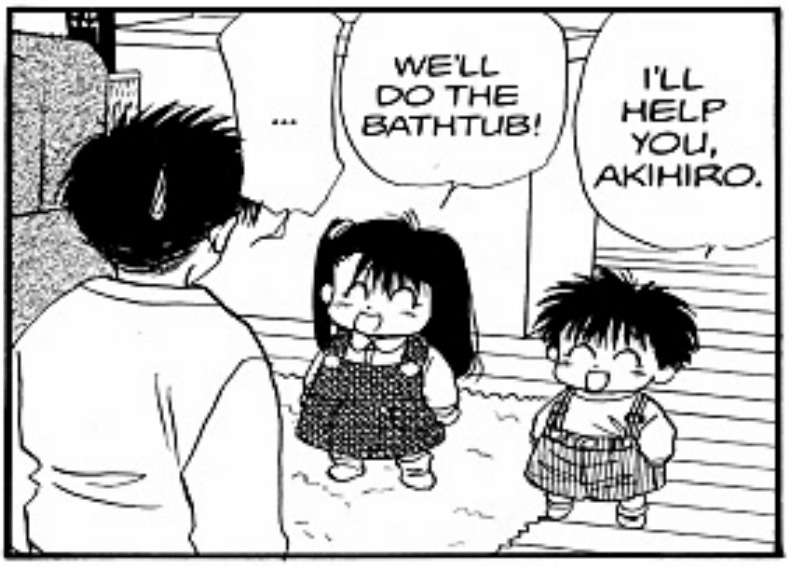
*ASAKO'S TALLER THAN HER OLDER SISTER.



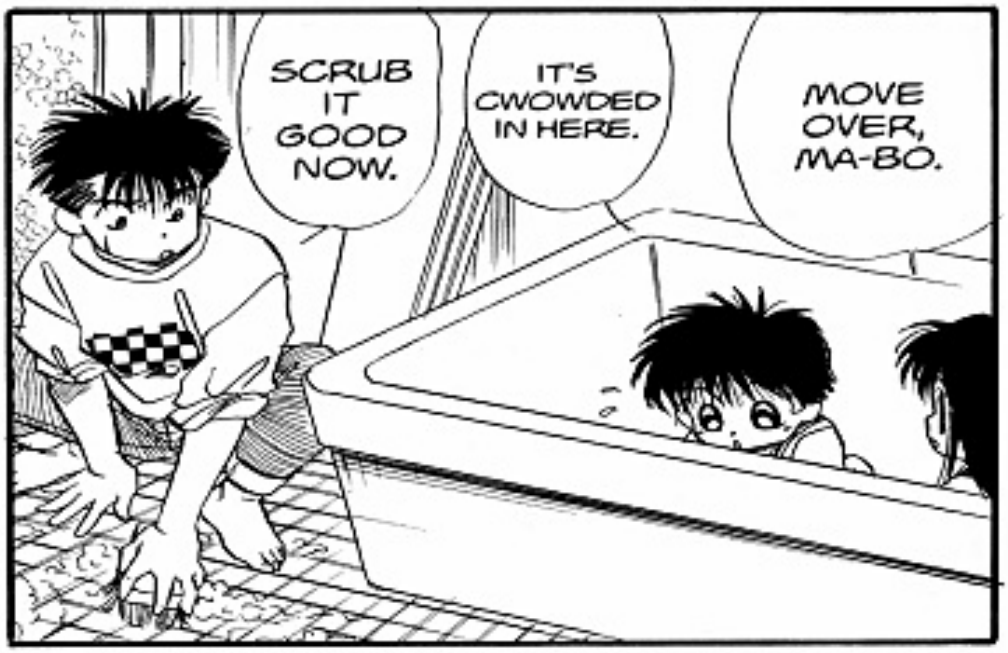
THERE YOU GO, PUSHING THEM OFF ON ME AGAIN!!
ASK AKIHIRO.
SNEAK
SNEAK
WELL?
WELL?

...WILL GET IN THE WAY.
ICHIKA AND MA-BO ...
HA!


SKRUSH
SKRUSH


...
WE'LL DO THE BATHTUB!
I'LL HELP YOU, AKIHIRO.

AM I THE BABYSITTER AROUND HERE?


SCRUB IT GOOD NOW.
IT'S CWOWDED IN HERE.
MOVE OVER, MA-BO.

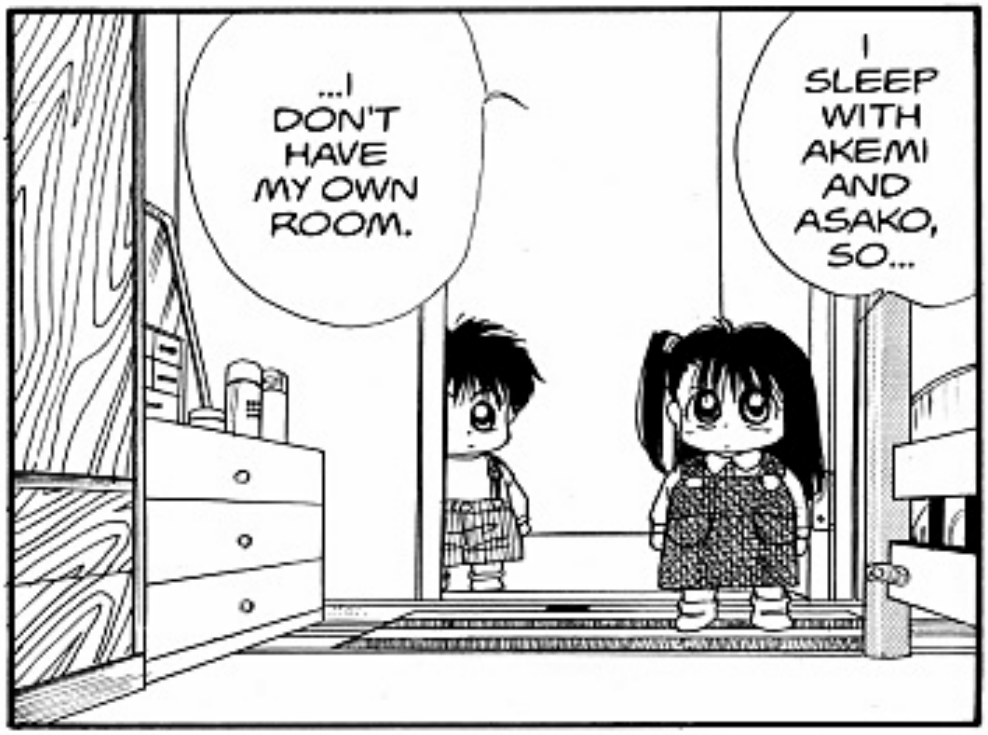
IT'S ON SHOWA.
YOU HAVE TO SWITCH IT.
OOPS.
KSHHH
OKAY.
I'LL TURN ON THE WATER, OKAY?
SKRUSH
SKRUSH
SOMETIMES I JUST CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THESE TWO.
GO CLEAN YOUR ROOMS!!
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP

I CAN'T HELP IT!!
DON'T GET THE FLOOR WET!
HEY!
WAAH
TOMP TOMP TOMP
WAAH
AKIHIRO YELLED AT US!!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
IF YOU SEE ANYTHING YOU WANT, TAKE IT.
NEVER MIND THAT. I'M THROWING THESE BOOKS AWAY.
...ALWAYS MAKE ME TAKE CARE OF ICHIKA AND MABO!
IT'S BECAUSE YOU GUYS ...
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY, A HEALTHY BOY...
I DON'T WANT THEM.
...SHOULDN'T TALK LIKE THAT.
ER.. GENTLEMEN'S LITERATURE.
REALLY? WHAT KIND OF BOOKS ARE THESE?

BUT I GOT THEM FOR FREE.
HMM...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET A LOT OF MONEY FOR THESE.
WHY DON'T YOU SELL THEM TO YOUR FRIENDS?

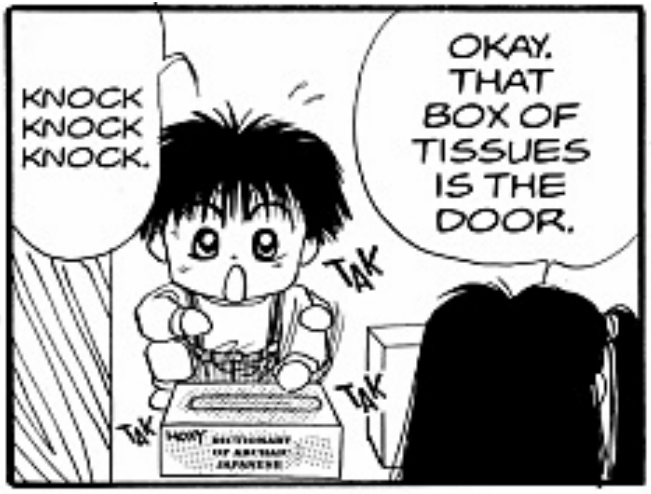
I LIKE HER TOO.
...THE ONE ON THE RIGHT, I GUESS. WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I LIKE ...
WHICH GIRL DO YOU THINK IS PRETTIER?

GEE, SIS, INDIGNATION REALLY BECOMES YOU.
...
BOOM
I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE WORKING HARD CLEANING THE ROOMS, BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!


...I DON'T HAVE MY OWN ROOM.
I SLEEP WITH AKEMI AND ASAKO, SO...

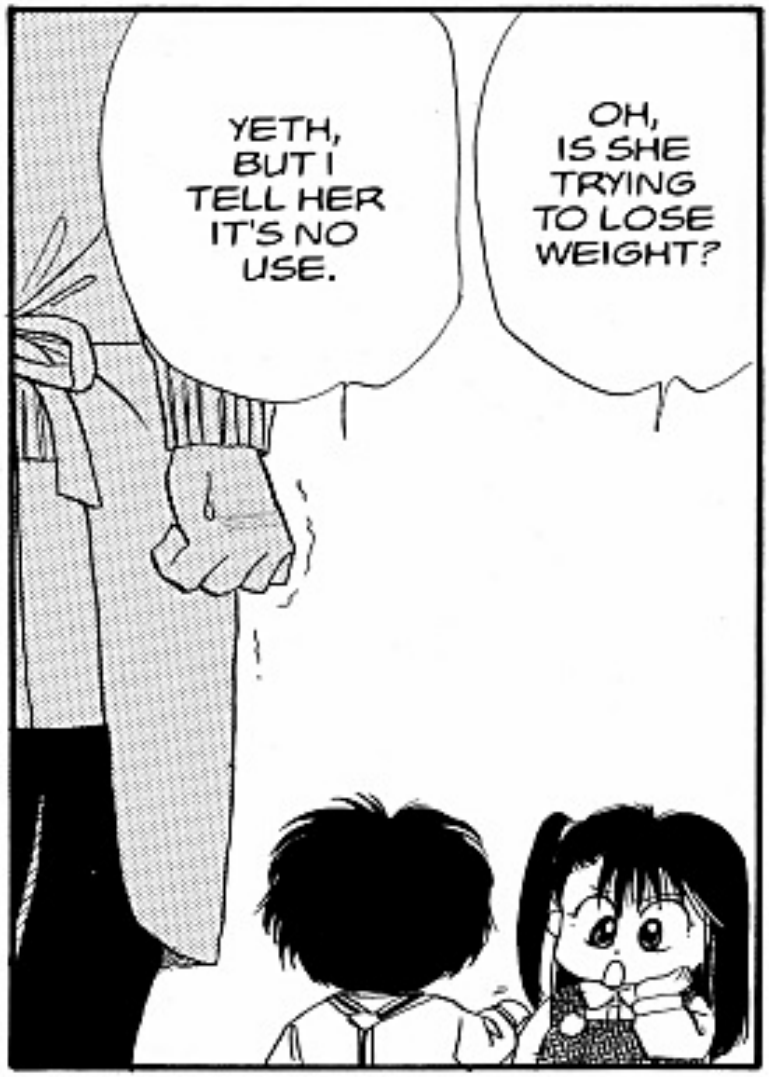
HE SAID TO CLEAN MY ROOM, BUT...

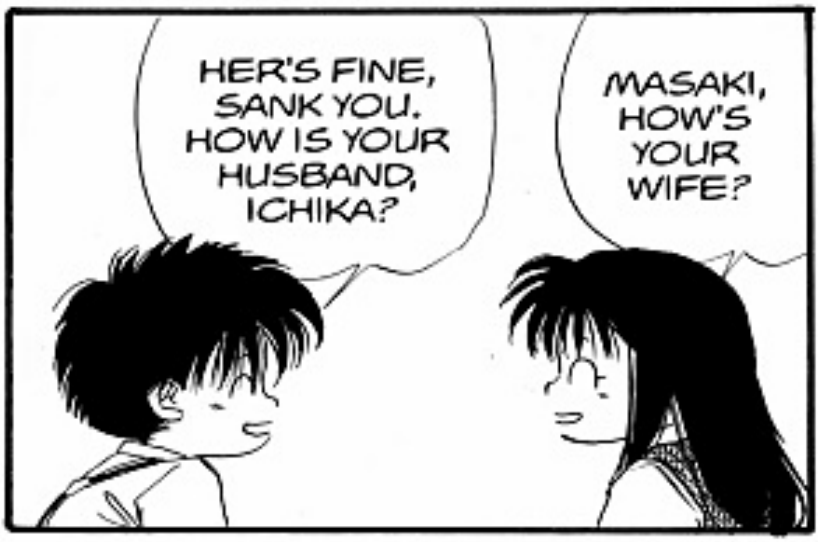
MEAN-WHILE, MINORU IS...
I WONDER WHAT MINORU'S DOING NOW.
I SHARE A ROOM WITH TOMOYA AND AKIHIWO, TOO.
THE ONLY THING THAT'S MINE IS THIS FRAMED PICTURE OF MINORU.
OKAY, I'LL MAKE MY OWN ROOM.
WHUP
I'D BETTER DO MY HOMEWORK WHILE I CAN.
HEE!
...DANCING TO THE PONKIKKI EXERCISE VIDEO.
PONKIKKI
DICTIONARY OF ARCHAIC JAPANESE
RAGAWA PUBLISHING
THERE!
THUMP

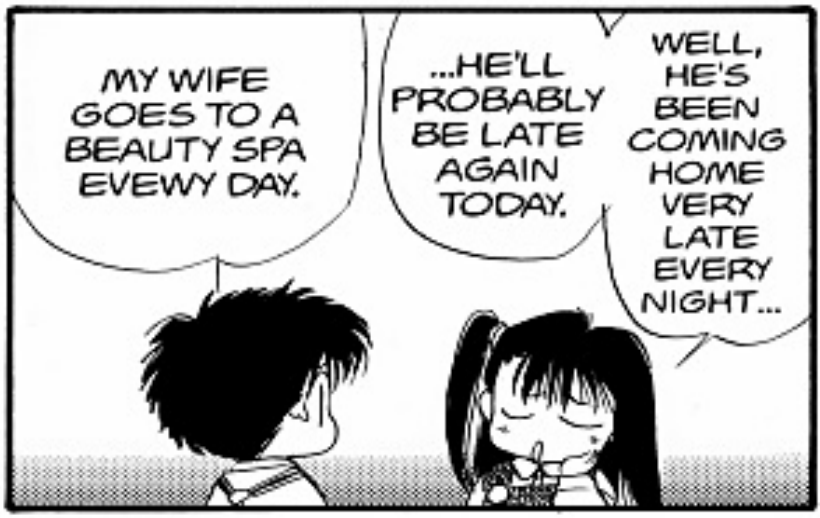

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.
TAK
TAK
TAK
OKAY. THAT BOX OF TISSUES IS THE DOOR.

THIS AREA WILL BE MY ROOM.
ME TOO, ICHIKA, ME TOO...

HELLO!
I'M COMING IN.
KREEK
DICTIONARY OF ARCHAIC JAPANESE

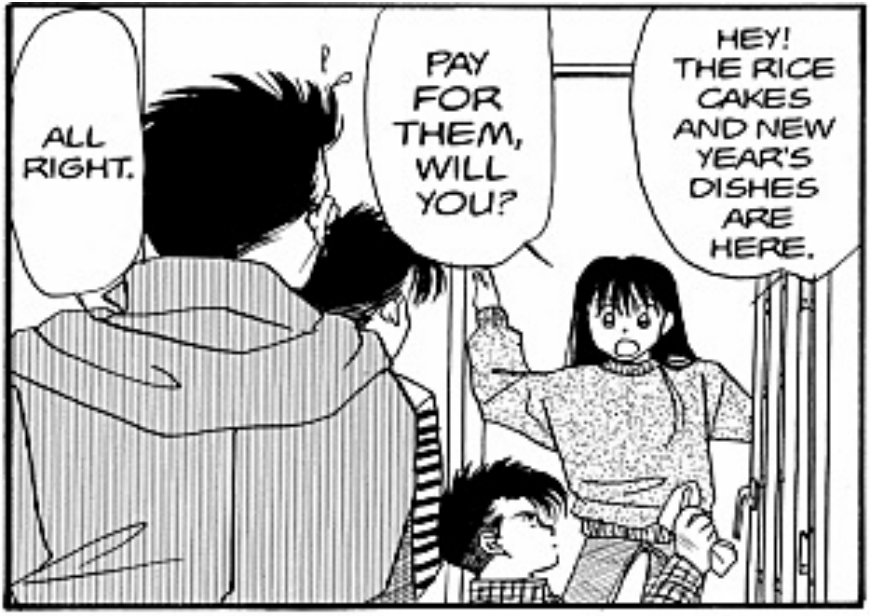

YETH, BUT I TELL HER IT'S NO USE.
OH, IS SHE TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT?


HER'S FINE, SANK YOU. HOW IS YOUR HUSBAND, ICHIKA?
MASAKI, HOW'S YOUR WIFE?


MY WIFE GOES TO A BEAUTY SPA EVEWY DAY.
...HE'LL PROBABLY BE LATE AGAIN TODAY.
WELL, HE'S BEEN COMING HOME VERY LATE EVERY NIGHT...

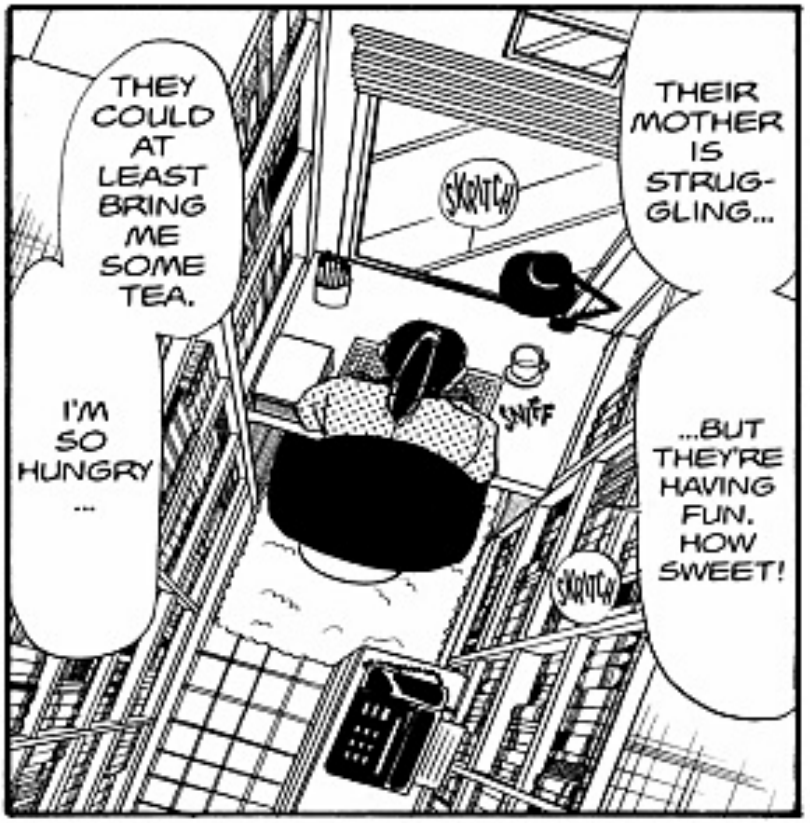
GRAAH
AAAH!
ICHIKA! MA-BO!
SHE'S LIKE A DEMON.
AKEMI IS THE SCAWIEST.
SNIFF
SNIFF
UNGH
DON'T MAKE A MESS!!
WADAH
YOU TWO! WHAT IS THIS?
A WOOM!
MA-BO, THERE'S SOME SPACE IN THE CLOSET.
O

AKIHIRO!! HELP ME WITH THE BAGS.
HEY...
WEL-COME HOME.
I'M HOME!!
UNH
UNH
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
I GOT ENOUGH FOR 10 PEOPLE.
THAT'S A LOT.
WELCOME HOME.
DID YOU GET THE NOODLES?
THEY WERE SOLD OUT OF THE MEDIUM-SIZE ONES.
THIS IS FOR THE ENTRYWAY, RIGHT? ISN'T IT KIND OF BIG?
RUSTLE
YEAH.
PASSIONATE DAILYWEAR STYLISH
I'M GONNA HAVE TWO BOWLS.
YOU TOO, RIGHT, AKIHIRO?
IT'S A NEW YEAR'S ORNA-MENT.
RUSTLE
WHAT'S THIS?

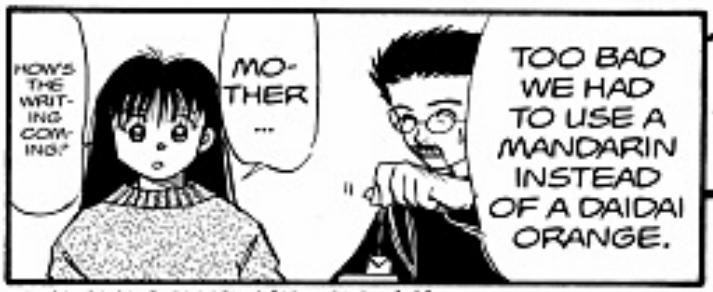


THIS ONE'S FOR THE ALTAR.
NEVER MIND. IT'S FOR GOOD LUCK...
A SMALL ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD ENOUGH.
THIS PROBABLY COST 5,000 YEN. A SMALL ONE WOULD HAVE COST ONLY 1,000 YEN.*
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE

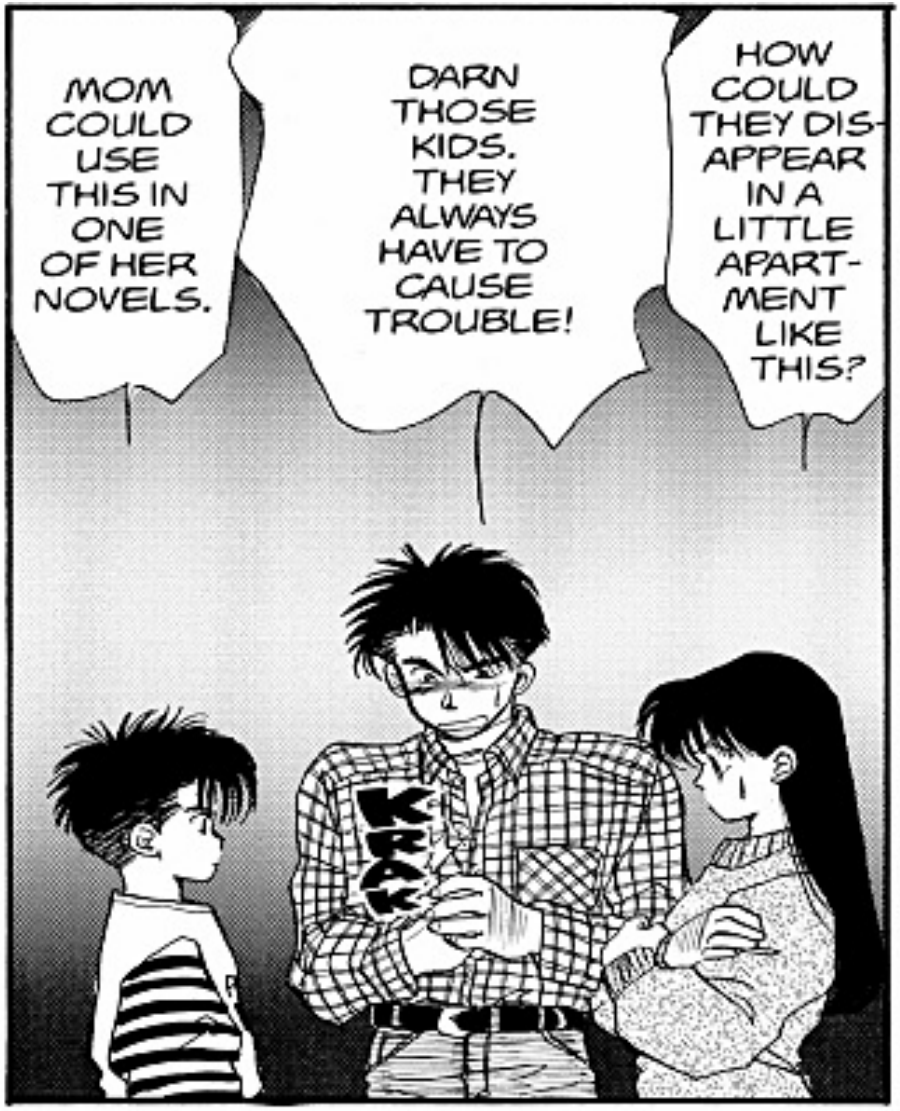
*$40 OR $8.25



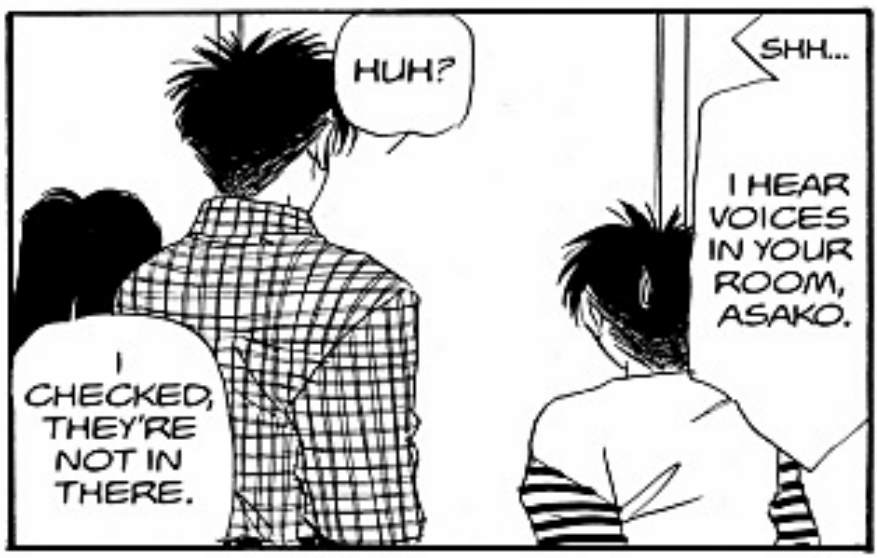
*OSHIRUKO IS SWEET RED BEAN SOUP WITH MOCHI RICE CAKE IN IT.



*DAIDAI ARE BITTER ASIAN ORANGES.


MOM COULD USE THIS IN ONE OF HER NOVELS.
DARN THOSE KIDS. THEY ALWAYS HAVE TO CAUSE TROUBLE!
HOW COULD THEY DISAPPEAR IN A LITTLE APARTMENT LIKE THIS?
KRAK

*WHAT IF THEY HAD BEEN?

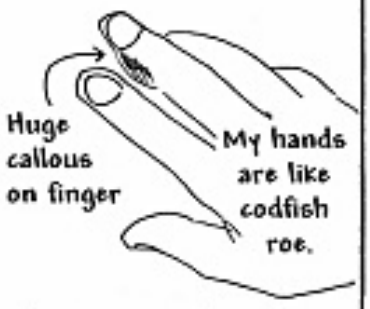


Author's Note Part 3

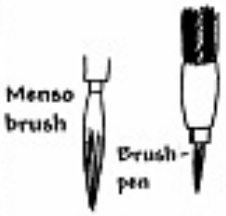
I draw with India ink. I don't like regular ink because it smears. Some people say that they can't draw well with a pen, but that's just because they're not used to it. I've been using a pen since I was 12—not that I'm a great artist or anything. Everybody has trouble with pens at first. Instead of avoiding them, you should use them all the time.

Once you've done 100 pages of illustrations with a pen, you'll be able to control it just fine.

Hang in there! I'm hanging in there too.



I use a menso brush that costs 2,000 yen ($17) for blacking in areas. I use a brush-pen to draw hair.

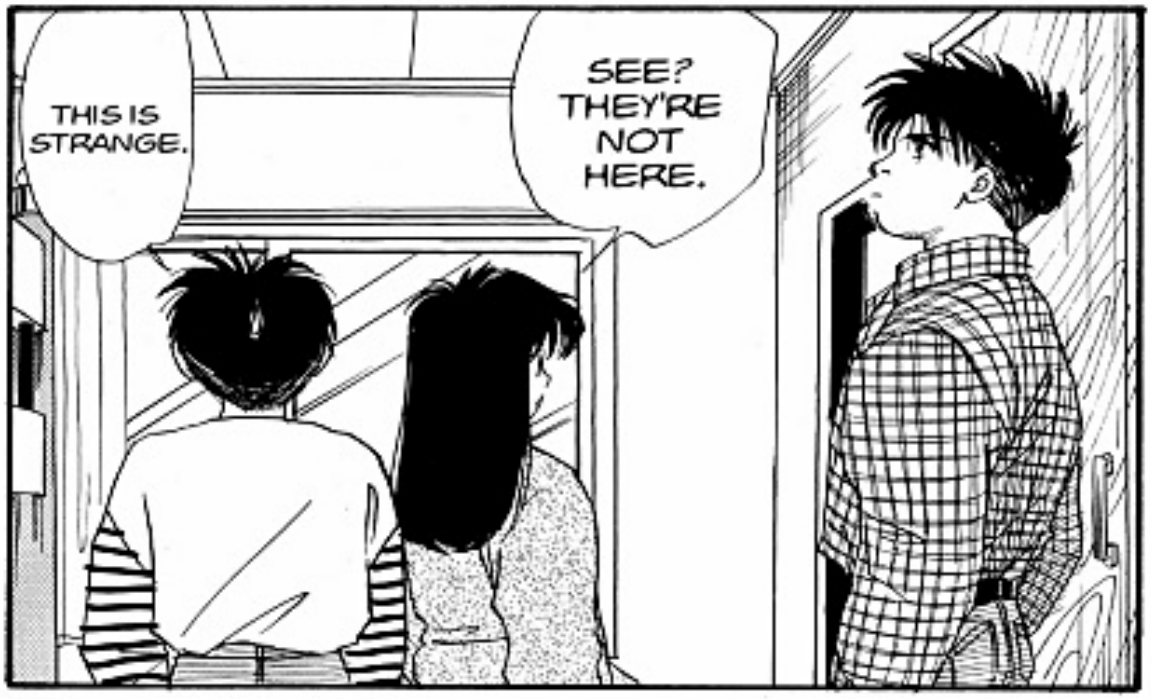


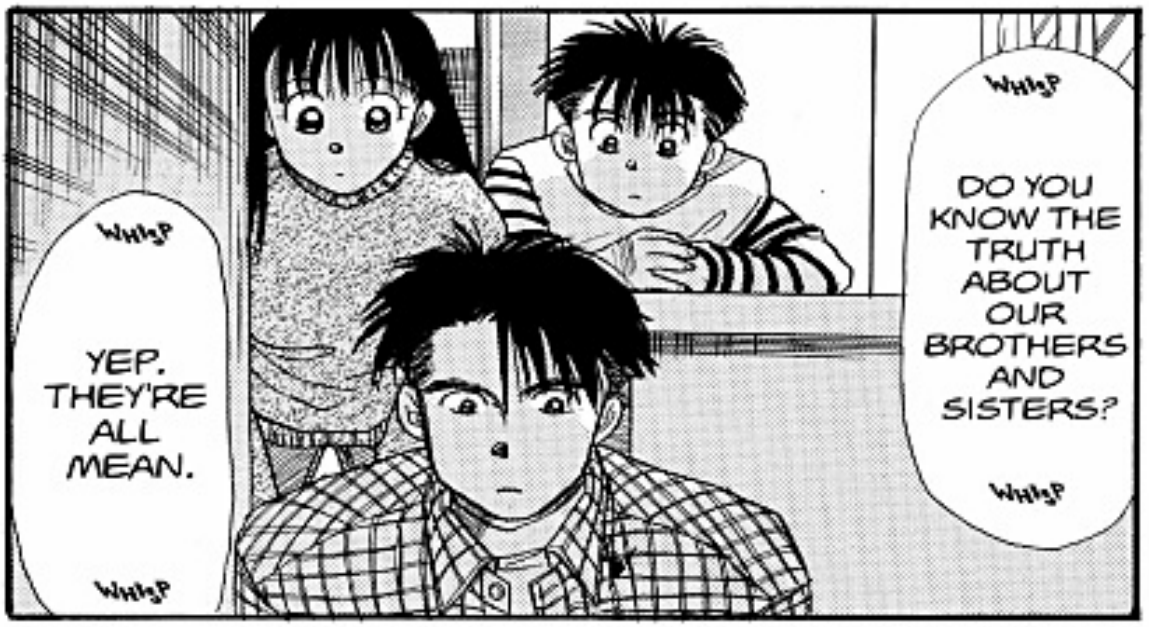
If you've never used a brush-pen, it's as easy to use as a felt tip.

To correct errors, I use white poster paint, or a correction fluid like White-Out.

There's a brush in the cap, so it's easy to use.

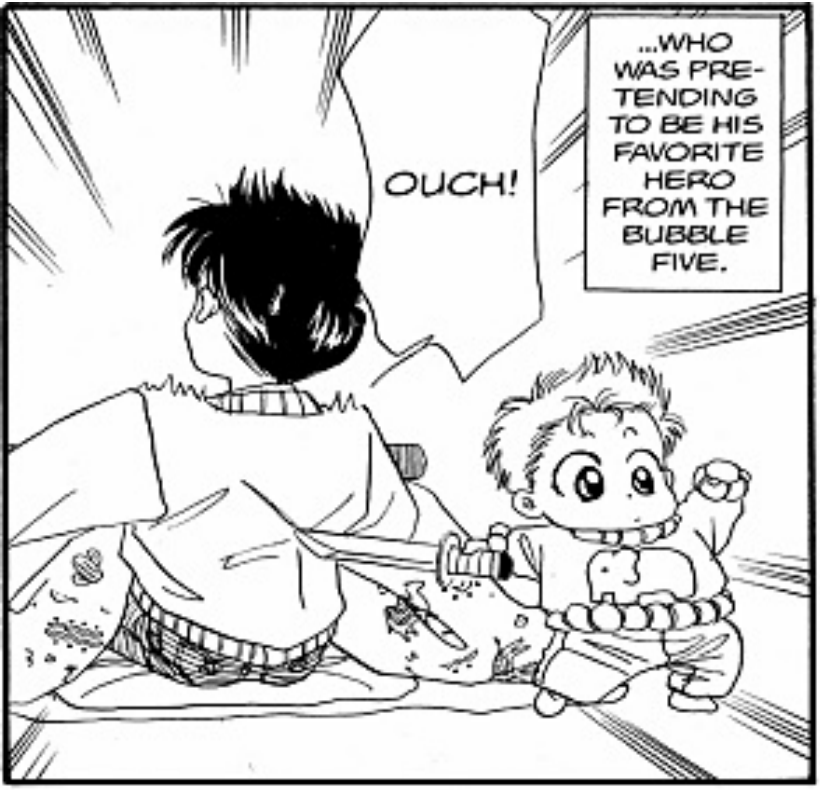
Cartoonists' Tools. The End





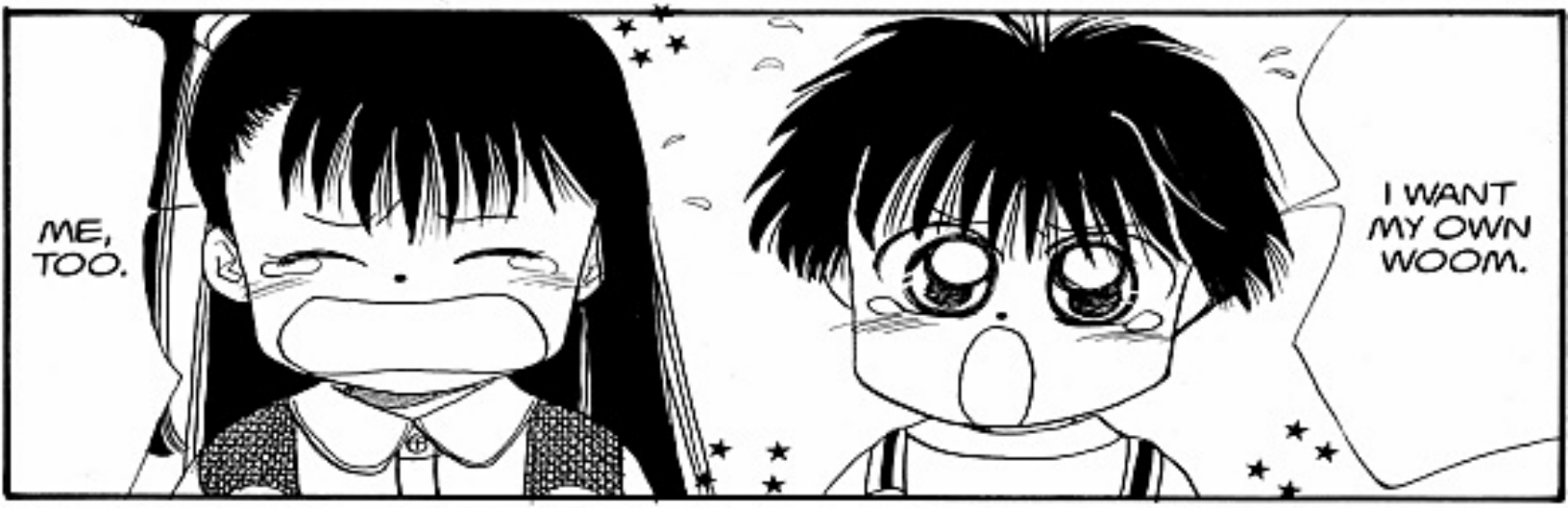
THE OLDEST ONE IS LIKE AN OGRE.
HER'S SCAWY ...
THE SECOND ONE IS A DIRTY-MINDED DELIN-QUENT.
HE YEWS AT ME.
THE THIRD ONE IS AWFUL TOO.
SHE DOESN'T HIT ME, BUT SHE ALWAYS PUTS ME DOWN WITH THAT COLD VOICE OF HERS.
NUMBA FOUR IS TOO MYSTEWIOUS.
WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S THINKING?
HE'S SURE TO KILL US ONE DAY.
...
HEY!

AAAAH
WHAM
ICHIKA!!
MA-BO!!
I WANT SOMEONE NICE, LIKE MINORU'S BROTHER!!
I DON'T WIKE MEAN BWUZERS AND SISTERS...
NEENER
NEENER
TOMOYA HIT ME!
BOO-HOO
BOO-HOO
OW!
BOO-HOO
BOO-HOO
HE'S RIGHT!
THEY DESERVED IT! DON'T PAMPER THEM, DAD.
TOMOYA!! WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!
WAAH
THOSE TWO ARE A COUPLE OF MOUTHY LITTLE BRATS!!

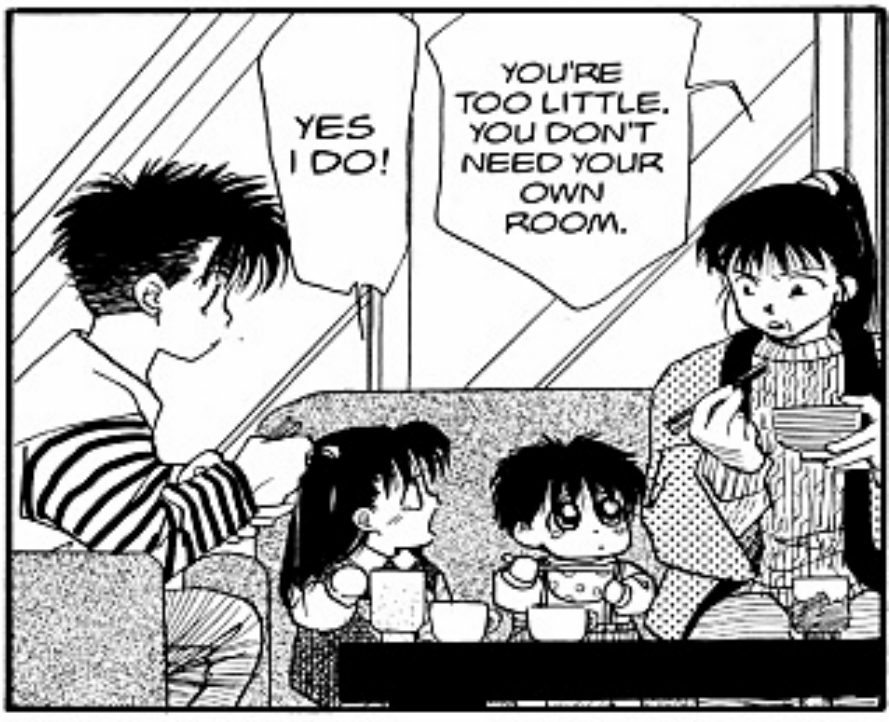

OUCH!
...WHO WAS PRETENDING TO BE HIS FAVORITE HERO FROM THE BUBBLE FIVE.

...WAS BEING STABBED BY MINORU WITH HIS TOY SWORD...
ZAP.
TA-DOOM

MEANWHILE, MINORU'S BROTHER...


ME, TOO.
I WANT MY OWN WOOM.

YOU WON'T BE SAYING THAT FOR MUCH LONGER.

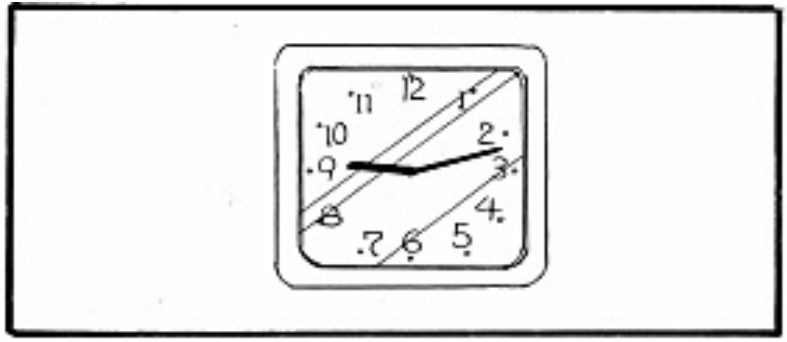

YES I DO!
YOU'RE TOO LITTLE. YOU DON'T NEED YOUR OWN ROOM.

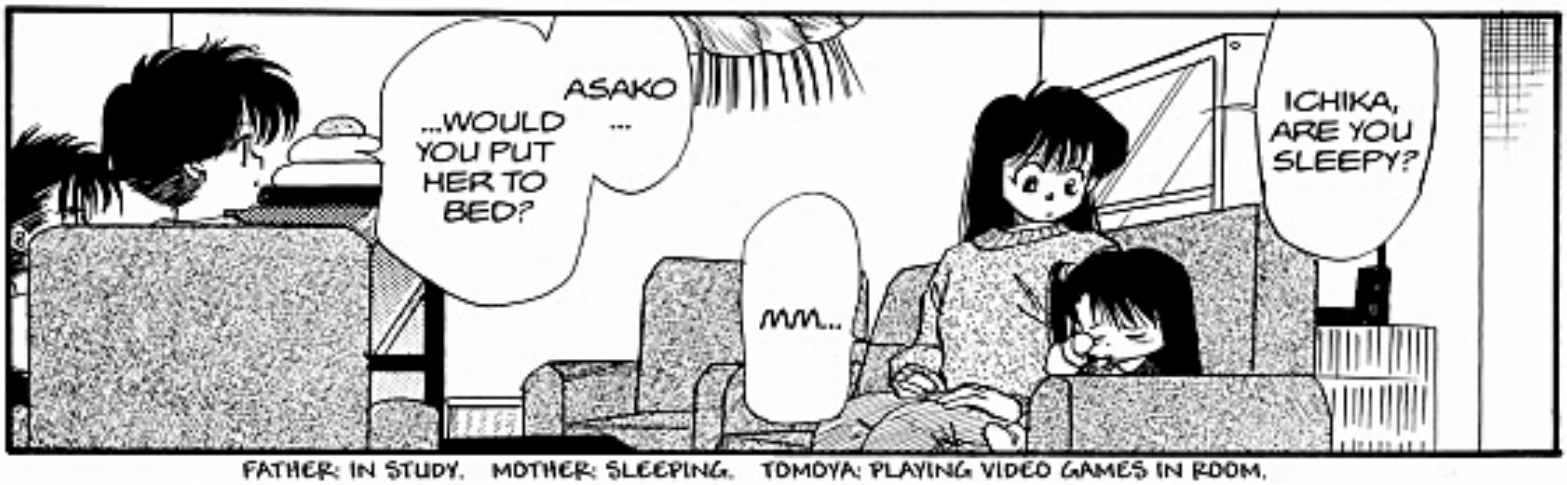
SO THOSE TWO ROOMS...
...WILL BE YOURS AND MA-BO'S.
...THE REST OF US WON'T BE LIVING HERE.
BY THE TIME YOU AND MA-BO ARE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...
WHY NOT?
HMPH
NO...
...
NO. THAT CAN'T HAPPEN.
WHY'D YOU GO AND MAKE MOM AND DAD CRY?

THESE TWO DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND.
YES, I DO!
DON'T YOU WISH THAT DAY WOULD COME SOON?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
THANK YOU.
I'M DONE.
THERE.
KLAK
WHAM
KREK
I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU.
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!
WELL, THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
KLAK
I'M GOING AROUND TO PICK THEM UP, BUT THEY'RE PROBABLY NOT DONE.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. SOME OF THE OTHERS STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED THEIR MANU-SCRIPTS.
I'M SO SORRY IT TOOK ME TILL NEW YEAR'S EVE.
YAWN

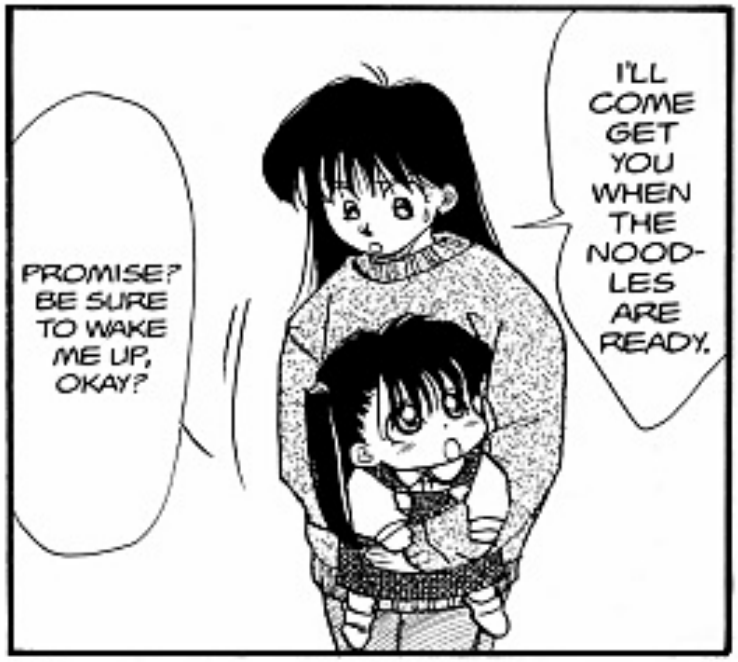
I'LL PROBABLY GO TO BED AROUND 2:00 A.M.
I'LL WAIT UNTIL AFTER WE EAT THE NOODLES.
AKIHIRO, ARE YOU GOING TO SLEEP TONIGHT?
LOOK, THE POPULATION IS OVER 200,000.
HO-HUM... I GUESS I'LL SLEEP UNTIL "OLD YEAR, NEW YEAR" STARTS.
FWAP
FWAP
ON THE FAR RIGHT. REMOVE THE ROADS AND USE RAILROADS INSTEAD.
HUH? WHERE?
HEY, YOU HAVE A TRAFFIC JAM OVER THERE.
BY Sim city
IF YOU AND THE OTHERS WENT AWAY...
...I'D HATE IT.
THE CRIME RATE IS HIGH.
CREATE POLICE STATIONS AROUND THE CONSTRUC-TION SITES.
BANG
BANG
HUH?
I... I'D HATE IT...

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET TO SEE YOUR SENTIMENTAL SIDE.
WHAT?
OH...YOU THINKING ABOUT THAT TOO?
BUT DON'T WORRY...
I'M STAYING WITH MOM AND DAD.
I'M STAYING HERE.
WHAD-DYA MEAN?
I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE YOUR SERIOUS SIDE.
WOW...





FATHER: IN STUDY. MOTHER: SLEEPING. TOMOYA: PLAYING VIDEO GAMES IN ROOM.



FLU-FFY ...
OKAY. HERE YOU GO.
FWUFF
I'M ALL WIGHT.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MA-BO?
DAILY WEAR STYLISH
MEAN-WHILE MINORU ...
I WONDER IF I'LL GET A NEW YEAR'S CARD FROM MINORU TOMORROW MORNING...
SNUG
SNUG
NOBODY'S GOING TO EAT YOUR SHARE.
DON'T WORRY.
BE SURE TO WAKE ME UP, OKAY?
TROMP
UGH!!
OH!
...HE GOT STEP-PED ON.
...AND WHILE HIS FATHER WAS CLEAN-ING UP...
SNORE
SNORE
...FELL ASLEEP AFTER DINNER.

I TOLD YOU, YOU CAN'T HAVE IT!!
I WANT IT! I WANT IT!
ASAKO, I WANT THAT RIBBON!!
YOU CAN'T HAVE IT.
ZZZ
ZZZ
NO WAY!
GIVE IT TO HER, ASAKO. I'LL GET YOU ANOTHER ONE.
BLUB...
TUG
GIMME! GIMME!
OUCH!
WAAAH!! ASAKO, YOU'RE SELFISH!!
THUD
STOP IT, ICHIKA!

ASAKO...

YOU KNOW, ASAKO GOT THAT RIBBON FROM A BOY SHE LIKES.

ICHIKA, WILL YOU GIVE THAT BACK TO ASAKO?
BUT... SHE GAVE IT TO ME...

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR RIBBON BACK.
I'M SORRY.

TUP TUP
ASAKO?

MOMMY...
DADDY...
AKEMI...
TOMOYA...
ASAKO...
AKIHIRO...
AND MA-BO...
...MUST ALL HATE ME!!

I'M A NAUGHTY GIRL!!
SOB
SOB

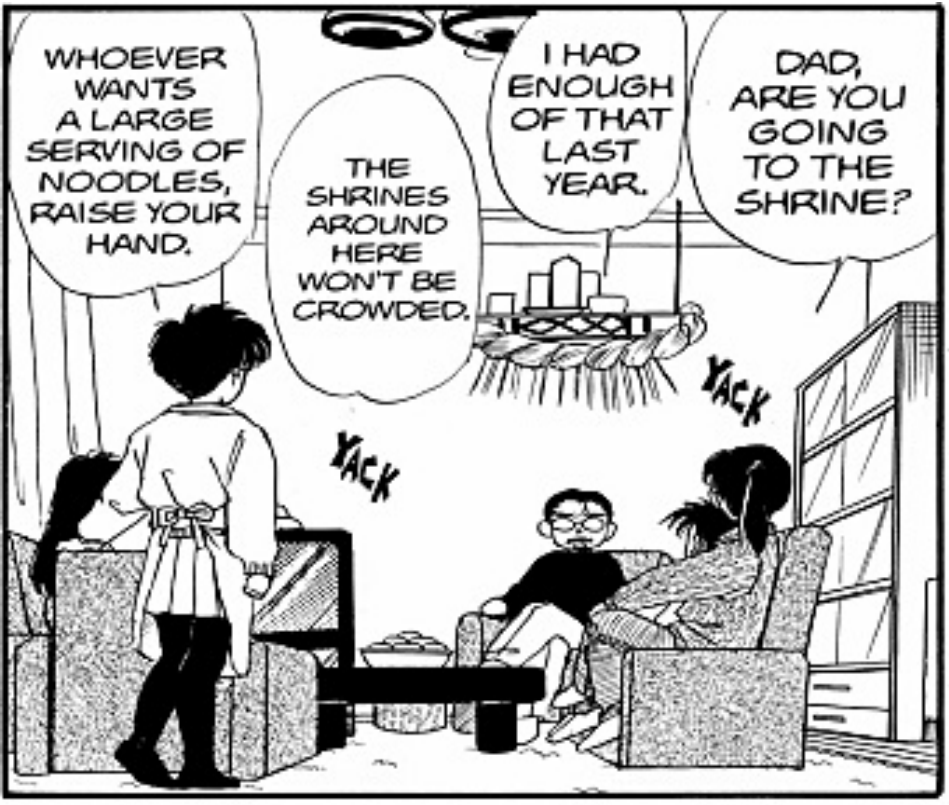
GASP

KLAK
TIP TIP TIP

WHUP
THE NOOD-LES!!

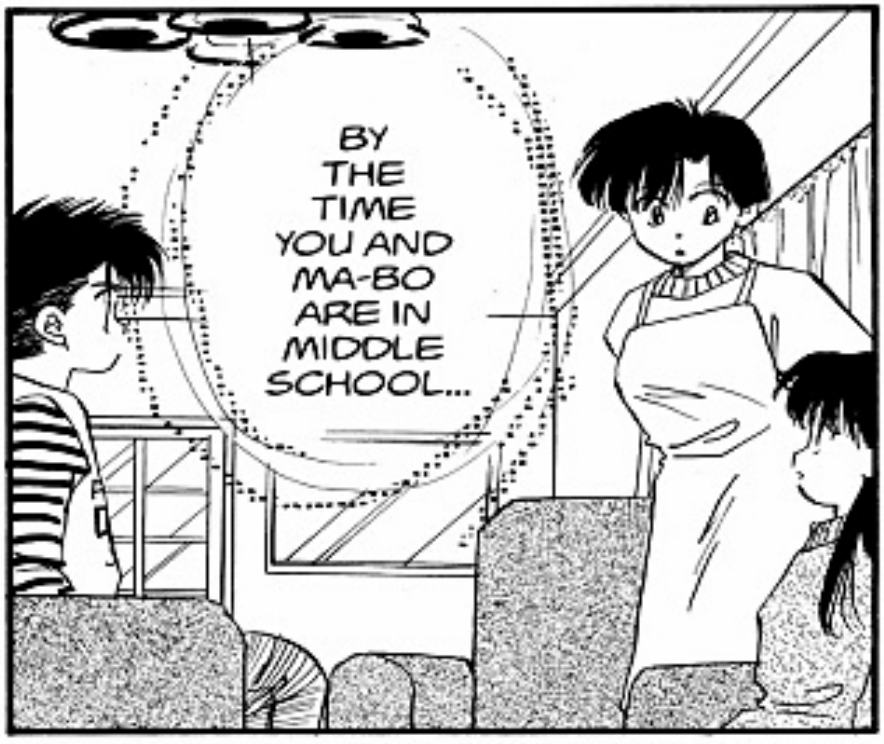
IT'S 11:56 P.M.
TAP

IT WAS A DREAM ...


WHOEVER WANTS A LARGE SERVING OF NOODLES, RAISE YOUR HAND.
THE SHRINES AROUND HERE WON'T BE CROWDED.
I HAD ENOUGH OF THAT LAST YEAR.
DAD, ARE YOU GOING TO THE SHRINE?
YACK
YACK

YACK
IT'S TWO MINUTES UNTIL THE NEW YEAR.
YACK

...THE REST OF US WON'T BE LIVING HERE!!


BY THE TIME YOU AND MA-BO ARE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...

NINE ...
TEN SEC-ONDS...
GO GET ICHIKA, OKAY?
OKAY.
EIGHT ...
SEVEN ...
CHAK
THREE ...
FOUR ...
SIX ...
PASSIONATE DAILY WEAR STYLISH
TWO ...
FIVE ...
IT'S THE START OF A NEW YEAR!
RAAH
...AND...
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
WHOOM
PASSIONATE DAILY WEAR STYLISH
RAAH

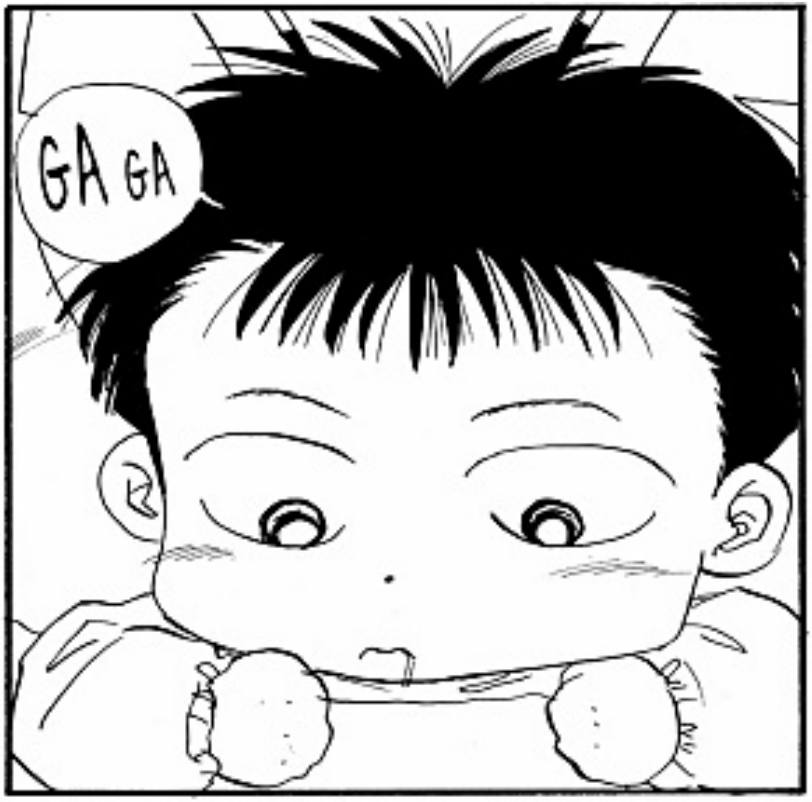
WHAT?!
ICHIKA'S CRYING OUT HERE.
KAH KAH
NOBODY'S EATEN YOUR SHARE...
...OF THE NOODLES!
SNIFF
WAAAH! NO, NO...
ICHIKA?
MEANWHILE MINORU...
I'M MORE SENSI-TIVE THAN THESE PEOPLE.
TOMOYA, YOU TOOK THE BIG PIECE OF TEMPURA!
THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MINE.
GEEZ... SHE'S SO GREEDY.
CRYING OVER NOODLES ...
DESE ARE GOOD ...
SLURP
...IT'S COLD... BRRR..
...WAS SLEEPING BESIDE TAKUYA AND WETTING THE BEDDING.
AH YUCK.

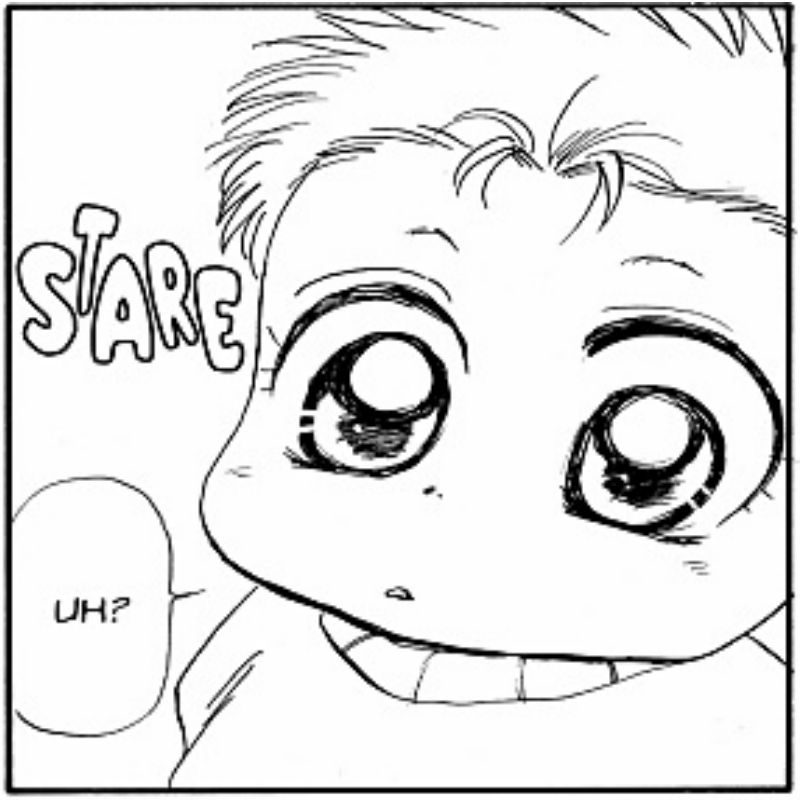
BABY & Me

CHAPTER 25

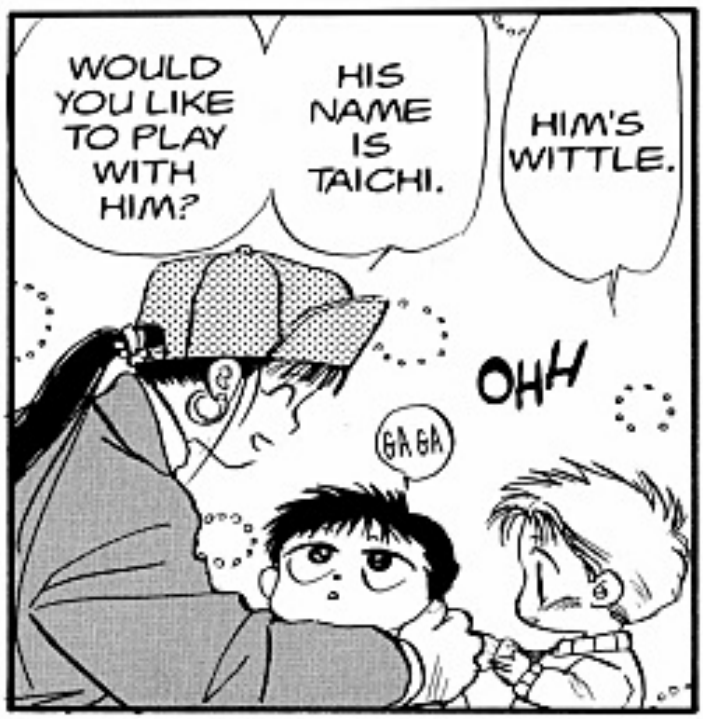
I'M TIRED OF HEARING "HAPPY NEW YEAR" ON TV.
I'M SICK OF ALL THE NEW YEAR'S SPECIALS. I WISH THEY'D JUST GO BACK TO THE REGULAR PROGRAMMING.
DING DONG
THE NEW YEAR'S SEASON PASSED SLOWLY, SPREADING LAZINESS IN ITS WAKE.
DING DONG
HUH?
SOME-ONE'S HERE...
DAZED
YAWN
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
DING DONG
DING DONG
TAKUYA ...
...GO SEE WHO IT IS, OKAY?
DING DONG

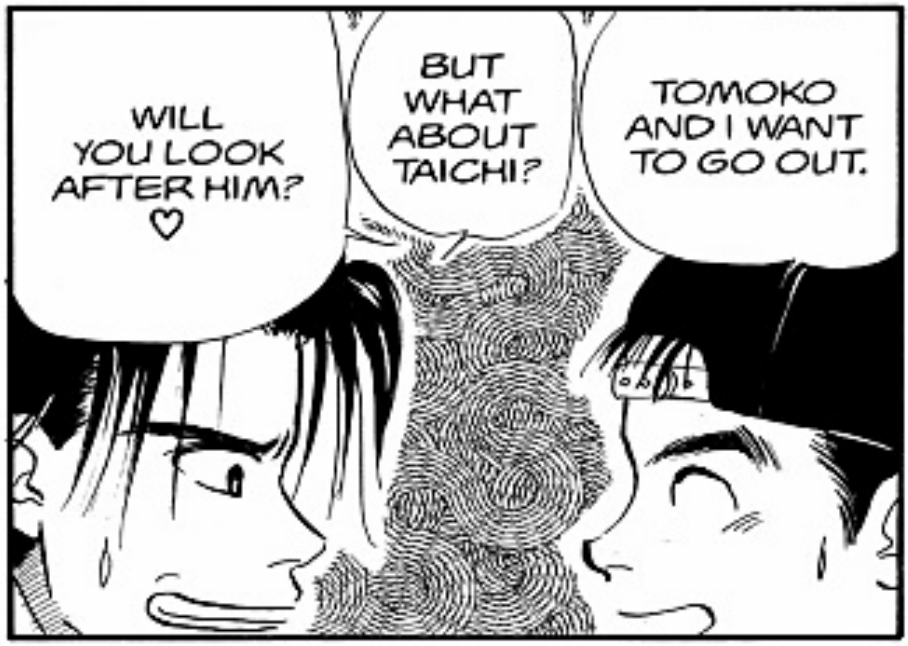
SEIICHI ...
WELL, YOUR DOOR WAS UNLOCKED AND NO ONE ANSWERED!
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU GUYS HAD SUCCUMBED TO CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING.
YOU SHOULDN'T BARGE IN TO OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMES.
SO...
...YOU ARE HOME.
HEH HEH HEH...
MR. AND MRS. KIMURA'S SON AND HIS FAMILY.
HAPPY NEW YEAR, TAKUYA. ♡
UH... HAPPY NEW YEAR.
HE'S NO BETTER THAN LAST YEAR!!
UGH...
HAPPY YEAW!
BOW
MINORU, WHERE'S YOUR GREETING?
UH?
THEY LIVE ACROSS THE STREET.


GA GA


STARE
UH?

HUH?
TA-DOOM
HERE YOU GO.
MILK


WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY WITH HIM?
HIS NAME IS TAICHI.
HIM'S WITTLE.
OHH
GA GA


WILL YOU LOOK AFTER HIM? ♡
BUT WHAT ABOUT TAICHI?
TOMOKO AND I WANT TO GO OUT.

...NOW THAT THE LITTLE TYKES ARE FRIENDS...
OKAY...

WE'LL BRING YOU BACK A TREAT!!
...PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF TAICHI.
TAKUYA ...
WELL, I GUESS WE COULD...
YEAH! ♡
MY HEART'S NOT MADE OF STONE.
AND WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING CARE OF KIDS, YOU AND TAKUYA...
...ARE THE PROS.
GRANDPA AND GRANDMA WENT TO A HOT SPRINGS.
PLEASE! ♡
YOU JUST WANT US TO BABY-SIT AGAIN, DON'T YOU?
HARUMI! HOW CAN YOU BE SO CYNICAL?!
DISPOSABLE DIAPERS
MILK
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WHAT?! OH.
OH, THIS IS FROM MY OLD MAN AND OLD LADY...
...AND TOMOKO AND ME. THEY'RE NEW YEAR'S PRESENTS FOR TAKUYA AND MINORU.
BA
AND SO WE ENDED UP BABY-SITTING TAICHI.
MINORU ...
OH? DOES THIS MEAN WE CAN'T ASK THEM AGAIN?
BEWILDERED
GEEZ, TOMOKO ...

THROB
UB
...
THROB
GOO
WEIRDO.
DON'T LURK, MINORU. COME OVER HERE.
CRADLE
CRADLE
STARE
KATTE
I WONDER IF HE'D EAT GRATED APPLE.
BUT YOU'RE NOT SO BIG YOUR-SELF.
YEAH.
HIM'S FEETS IS WITTLE.
HEE
GIVE HIM TO ME.
OKAY.
MINORU CRIED ALL THE TIME.
HE DOESN'T CRY AT ALL, DOES HE?
GA GA

...
LOOK AT HIM EAT.
HEH...
NUM
WOW, HE REALLY IS LITTLE.
OOPS, THAT'S HIS LEFT HAND.
...
AND IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO FOR MINORU.
TAKUYA AND MINORU USED TO BE THIS LITTLE.
HMM...
NUM
NUM

MINOWU WANT SOME!!
I THINK MINORU'S MAD.
DAD...
MUNCH
MUNCH
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, MINORU?!
OH!
MINORU, HAVE SOME APPLE BUNNIES.
...
THOOM
SOME-BODY'LL HAVE TO GO SHOPPING.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO EAT TONIGHT? THERE'S NOTHING IN THE FRIDGE.
DAD ...
I'LL GO.
MAYBE HE'S JEALOUS.
MUNCH
HOW COME?

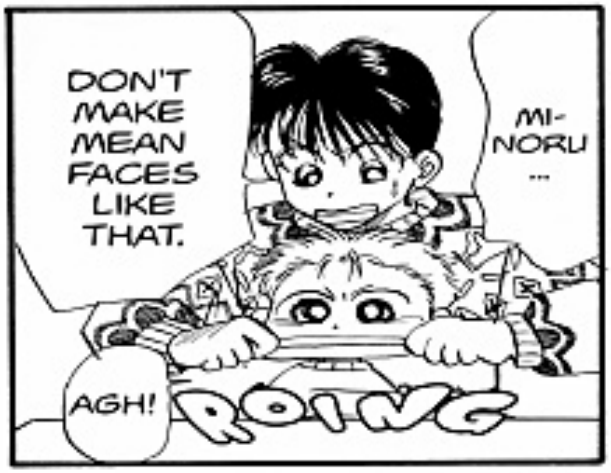
ZAK
ZAK
ZAK

GLARE

GOO

I STAY WIF BWUZA.
PUD

YOU WANT TO COME SHOPPING WITH ME, MINORU?
UH?


DON'T MAKE MEAN FACES LIKE THAT.
MI-NORU ...
AGH!
POING

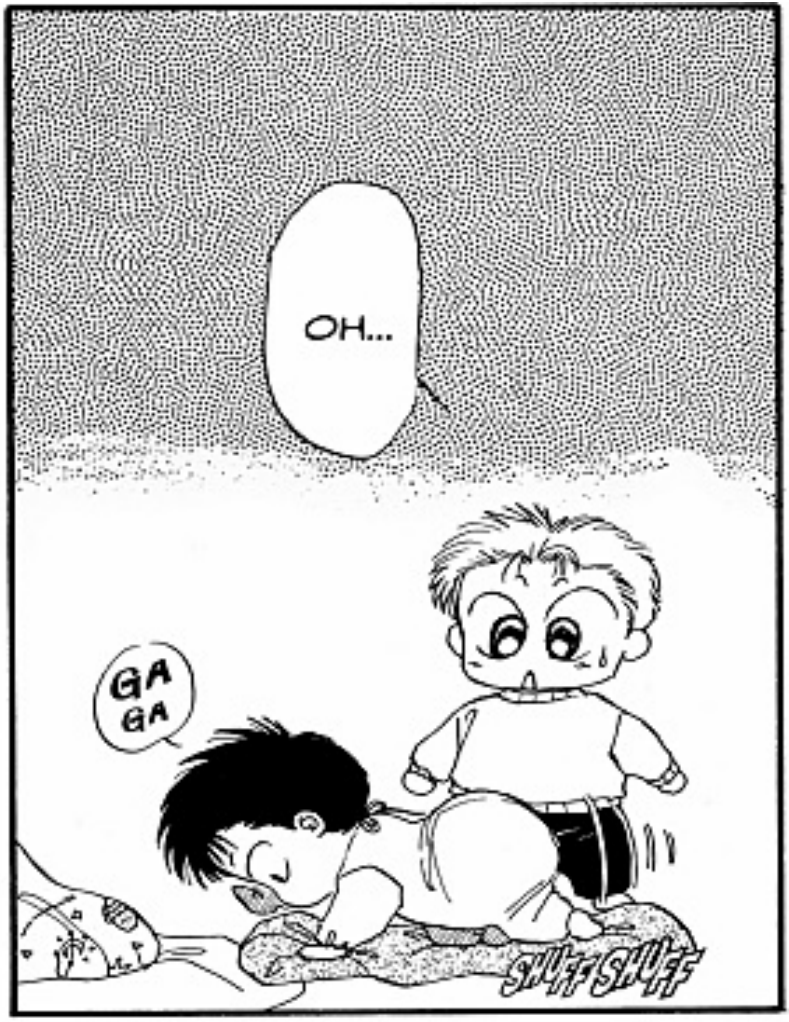
UM, YEAH.
YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY?
TWO ON A LAP

OKAY.
SEE YOU.

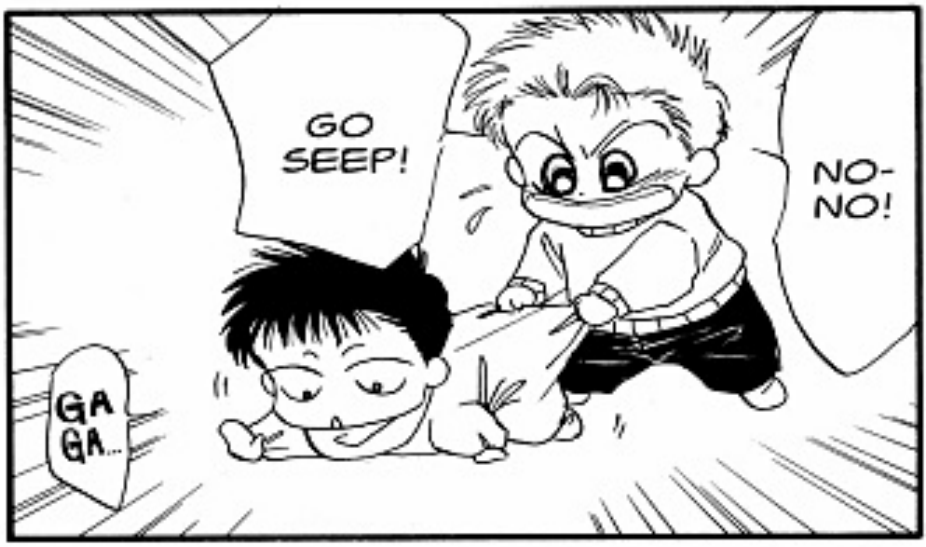
HUH?
...KEEP AN EYE ON TAICHI!!
MINO-RU ...
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
WOOSH
KLAK
GA
GA
KLOMP
KLOMP
RING
RING
HUH?!
WHUP
BA
UM... HELLO?

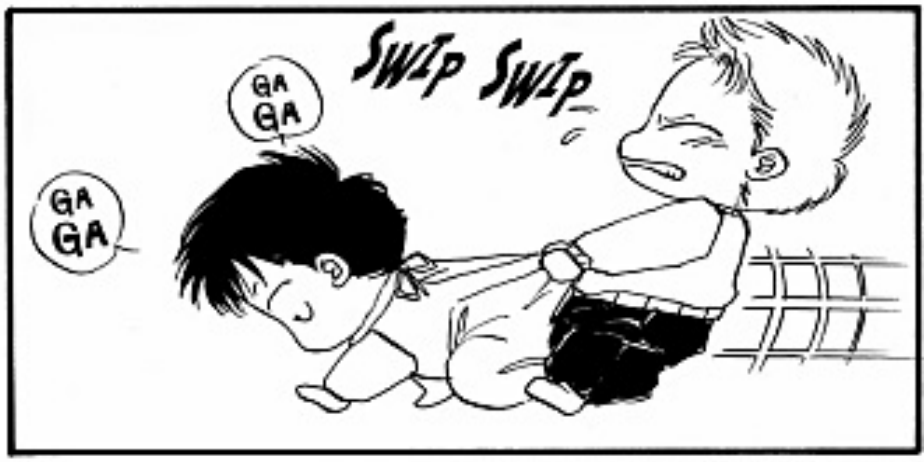
FWOOF

SHUFF SHUFF
OH?!
GA GA


OH...
GA GA
SHUFF SHUFF

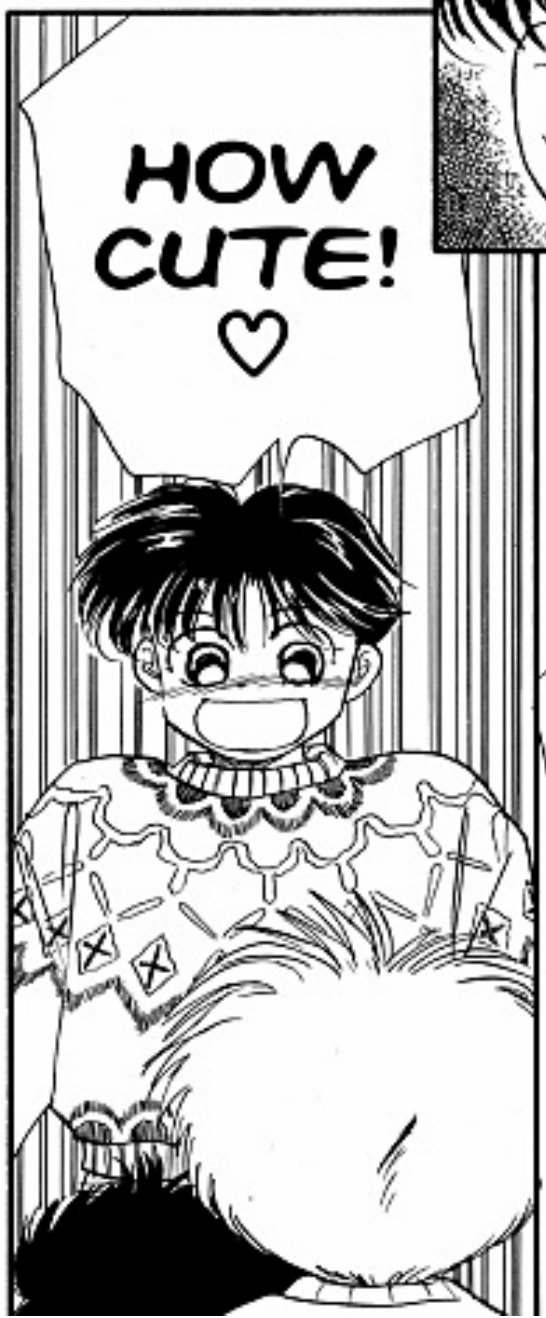
TUG TUG TUG
DOH...
GA GA

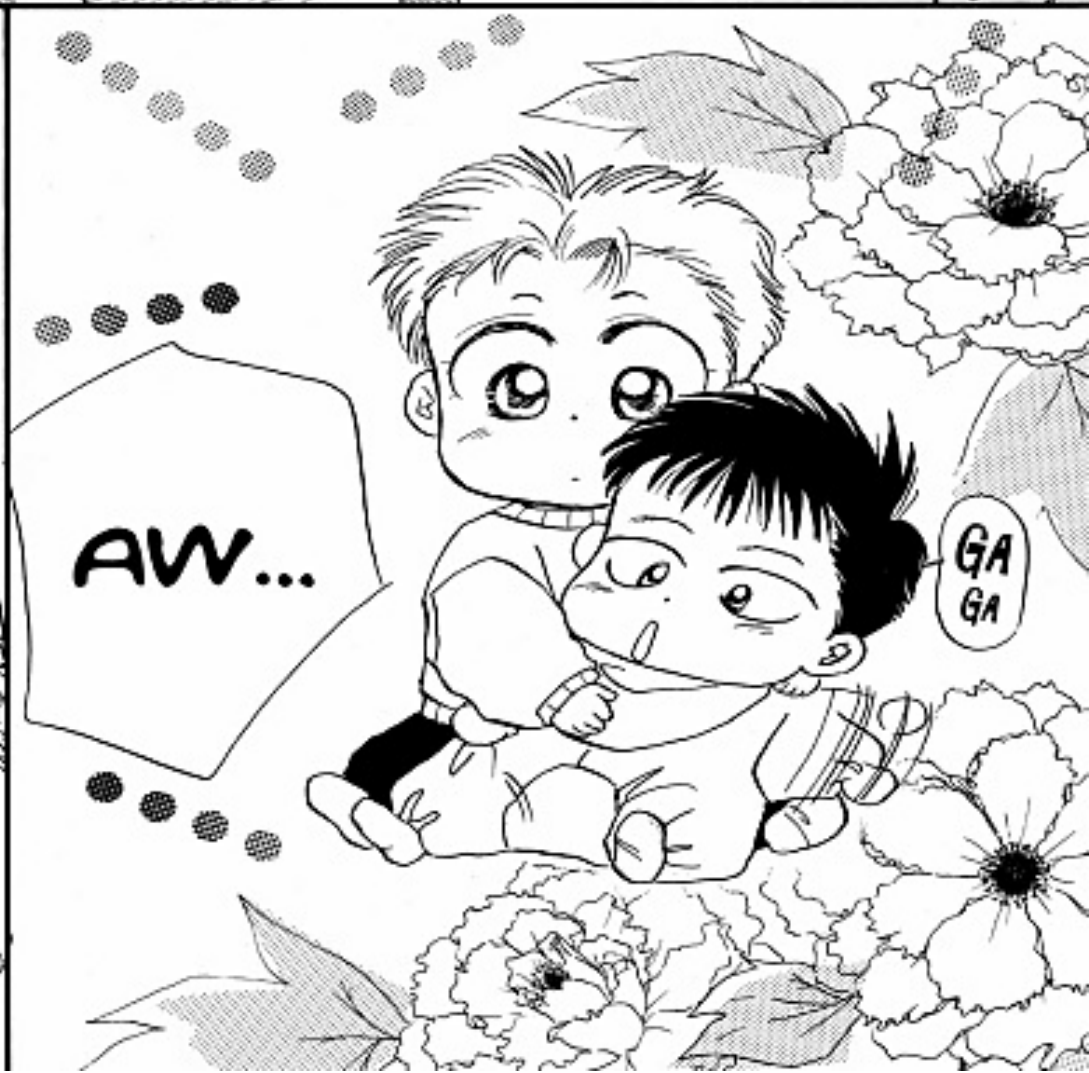

GO SEEP!
NO-NO!
GA GA


SWIP SWIP
GA GA
GA GA

EVERY YEAR HE WAITS TO THE VERY END OF WINTER BREAK TO DO ALL HIS HOME-WORK.
THAT WAS GON.

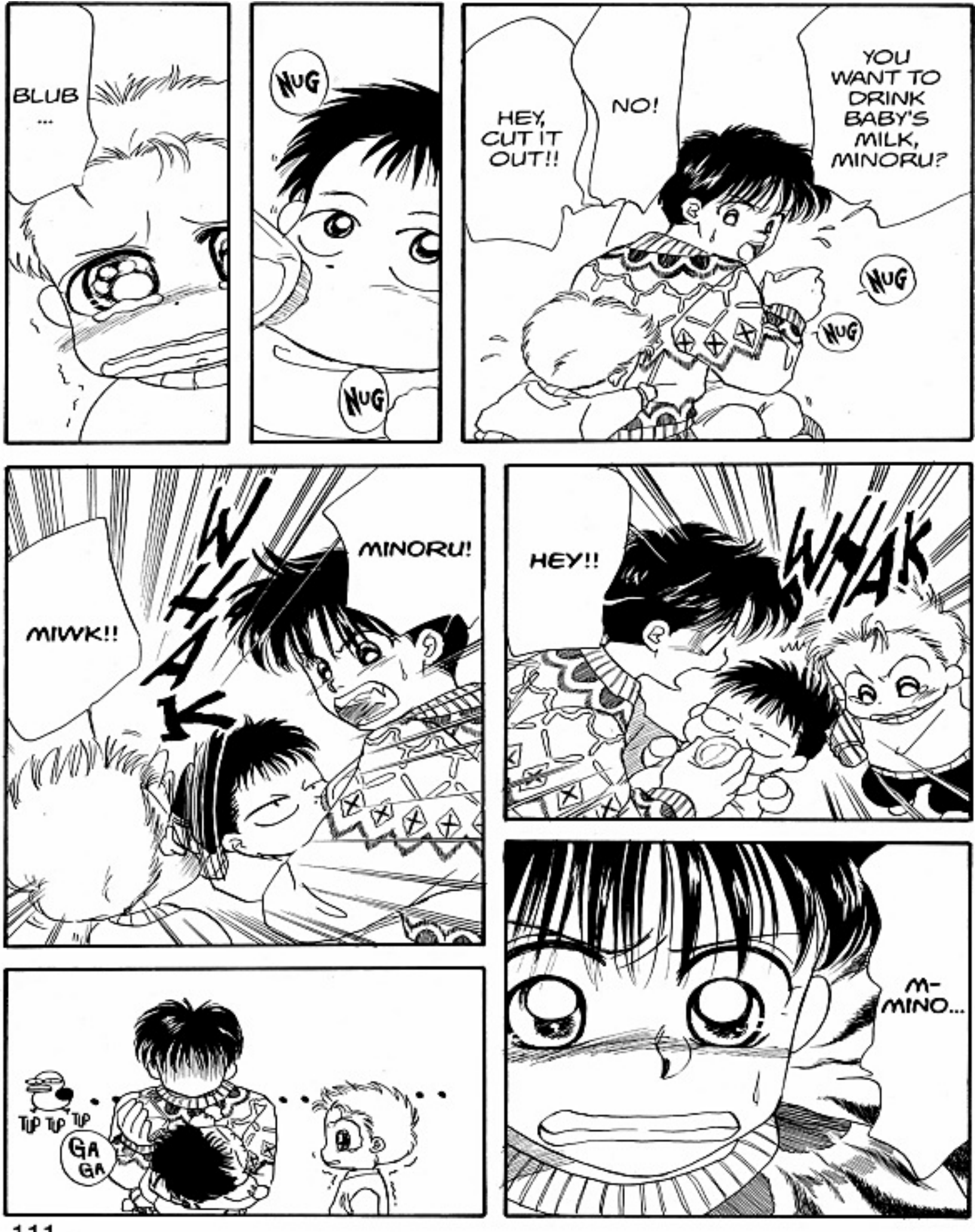
OKAY.
TALK TO YOU LATER.


HOW CUTE! ♡


AW...
GA GA

Author's Note
Part 4
Yoshizo Today
Yoshizo likes to stare at me from across the room.
He looks so funny that sometimes I yell out for no reason.
HAH!
Then Yoshizo freezes for three seconds...
...and suddenly jumps up and turns around.
He jumps about a foot in the air...
FWP
BO-ING
...then he dashes away.
Tell me, Yoshizo, why the three-second pause? And why do you jump up and change directions?
DASH
I'LL SHOW THEM THIS WHEN THEY'RE GROWN UP.
HUFF
HUFF
A LITTLE BOY HUGGING A LITTLE BOY!!
WUZZ
WUZZ
OKAY...
SAY "CHEESE"!!
...
K-LIK
I WONDER IF TAICHI'S CRYING.

THAT'S A GOOD THING, RIGHT?
BUT HE NEVER CRIES.
MOST BABIES DO CRY, DON'T THEY?
BUT NOT TAICHI.
TAICHI DOESN'T CRY.
PROBABLY. HE'S FINE.
OKAY...
I THINK THIS IS ABOUT RIGHT.
TAP
BODY TEMPER-ATURE...
BODY TEMPER-ATURE...
BODY TEMPER-ATURE...
I WANT SOME TOO!
SHWAP
I HAVEN'T DONE THIS FOR A WHILE.
WiP

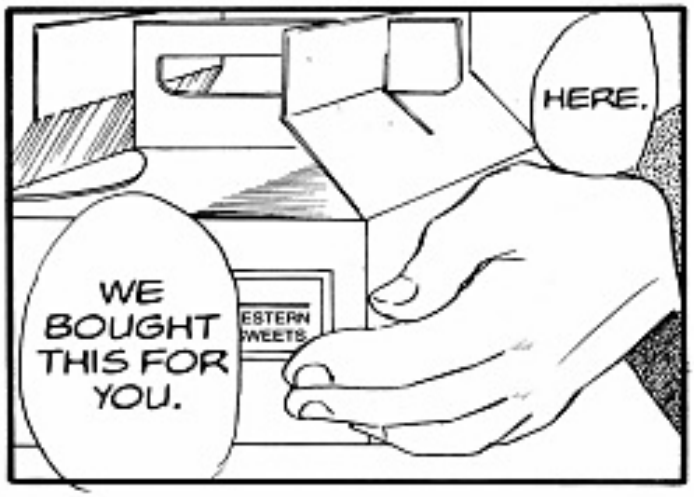

BLUB ...
NUG
NUG
HEY, CUT IT OUT!!
NO!
YOU WANT TO DRINK BABY'S MILK, MINORU?
NUG
NUG
MINORU!
WHAK
MIWK!!
HEY!!
WHAK
TUP TUP TUP
GA GA
M-MINO...

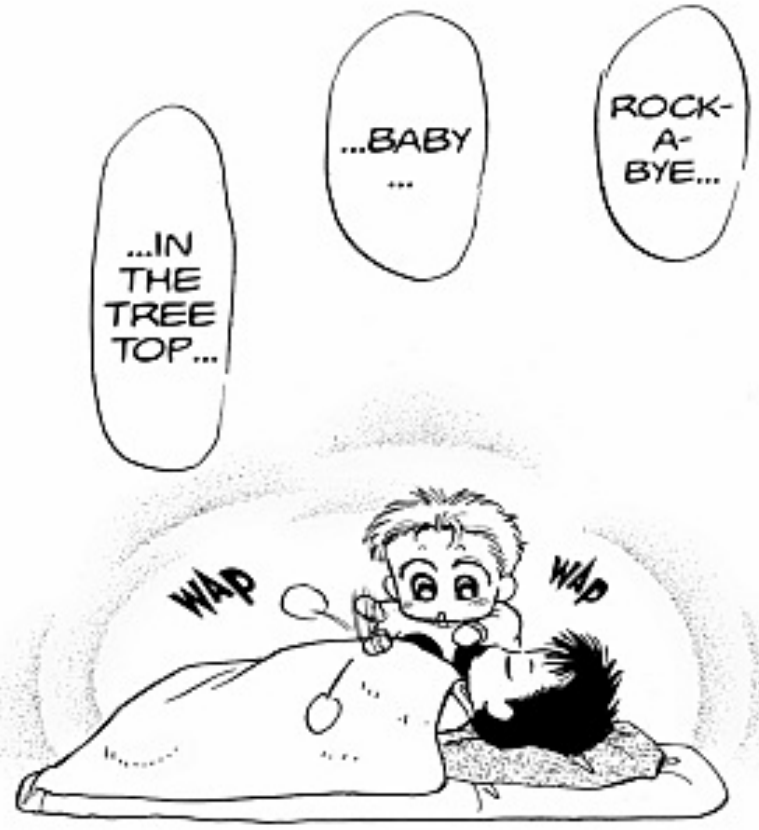
OH...
AAAH
BWAH
BWUZA... HURT...
WHY ARE YOU CRYING, MINORU?!
SOB
SOME-THING'S WRONG HERE...
WAAAH
HUH?
MINORU AND TAICHI...
...FELL ASLEEP?

GREAT! I'LL MAKE SOME TEA.
STARE
...
KLAK
CAN I HAVE A SWEET BUN?
YEAH.
SURE.
HOW...
...CUTE!
♡
...

TAICHI NEVER CRIES AT ALL.
IT'S NOT FAIR TO COMPARE THEM.
THEY'RE TWO ENDS OF THE SPEC-TRUM.
"MUNCH MUNCH"
I DON'T GET IT.
FILLED WITH CUSTARD CREAM
MINORU CRIES ALL THE TIME.
LIKE SON, LIKE FATHER.
WHY NOT?
CAN I TAKE A PICTURE OF THEM?
AND HE GETS MAD EASILY.
SLURP
AND IT'S CREEPY WHEN HE STARES AT YOU FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.
HE CRIES OVER EVERY LITTLE THING.
FIRST THING NEW YEAR'S MORNING, MINORU WET THE BED.
BUT...
...A SPOILED BRAT.
LISTENING TO ALL THIS, YOU'D THINK MINORU WAS...

KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
DAD, I CAN'T FLIP THE FISH...
NEVER MIND. I'LL DO IT.
...IT'S EASY TO GET TAKEN IN BY THAT FACE.
Zzz
Zzz
HIM'S COLD.
HUH?
BACK TO NORMAL
TCHOO
ID
BED HAIR
SNIFF SNIFF

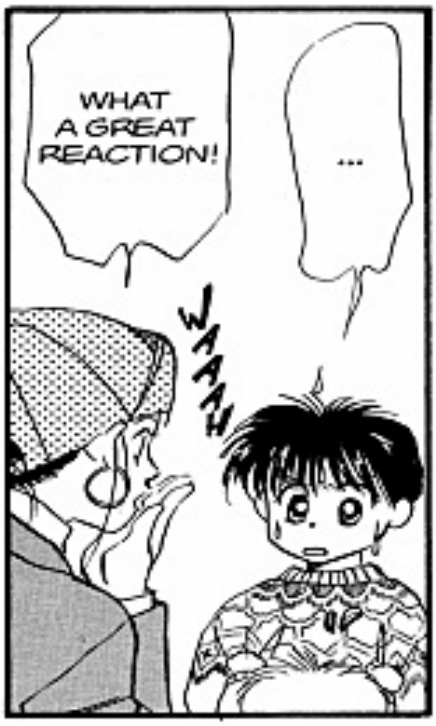

HERE.
WE BOUGHT THIS FOR YOU.
ESTERN SWEETS


ROCK-A-BYE...
...BABY...
...IN THE TREE TOP...
WAP
WAP

STARE
UH?

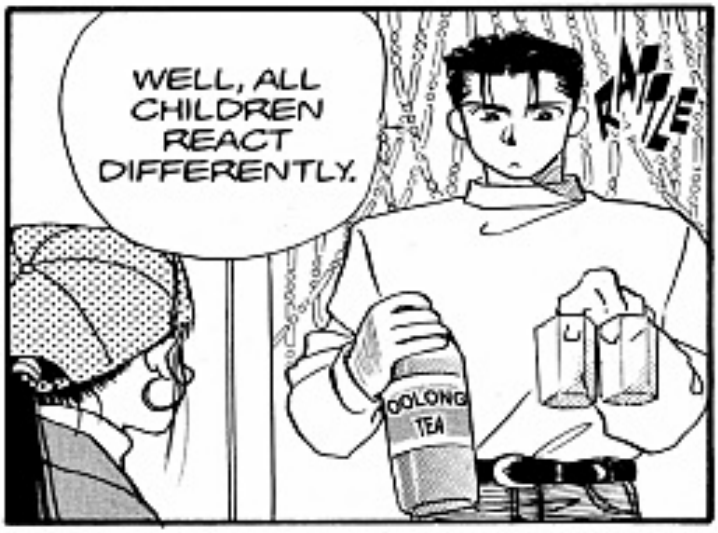
HUH?
DID TAICHI CRY?
NO, NOT AT ALL.

...ESPECIALLY THIS STRAWBERRY MOUSSE.
THEIR PASTRIES ARE REALLY GOOD...
YAY! CAKES! WE CAN HAVE THEM FOR DESSERT.


WHAT A GREAT REACTION!
...
WAAH

AGH!

OH!
OH!
POKE POKE

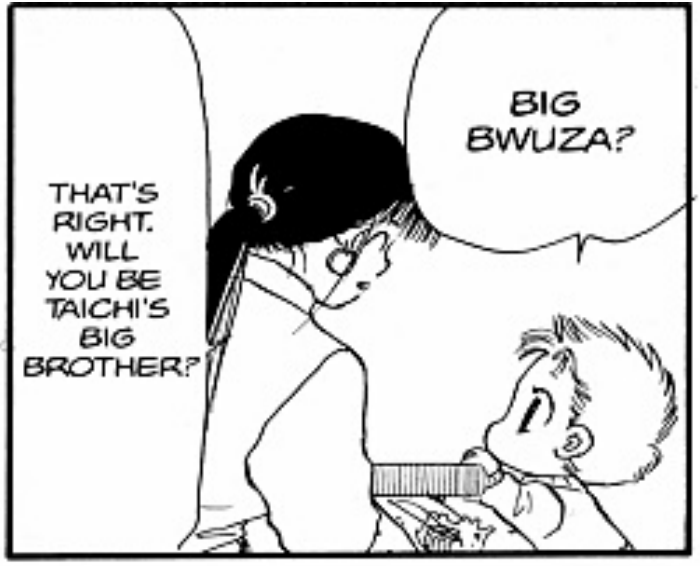

WELL, ALL CHILDREN REACT DIFFERENTLY.
RATTLE
OOLONG TEA

SEE, SEIICHI?
THIS IS HOW A NORMAL CHILD REACTS!!
WHAT ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT FOR?
SOB

PLUNK

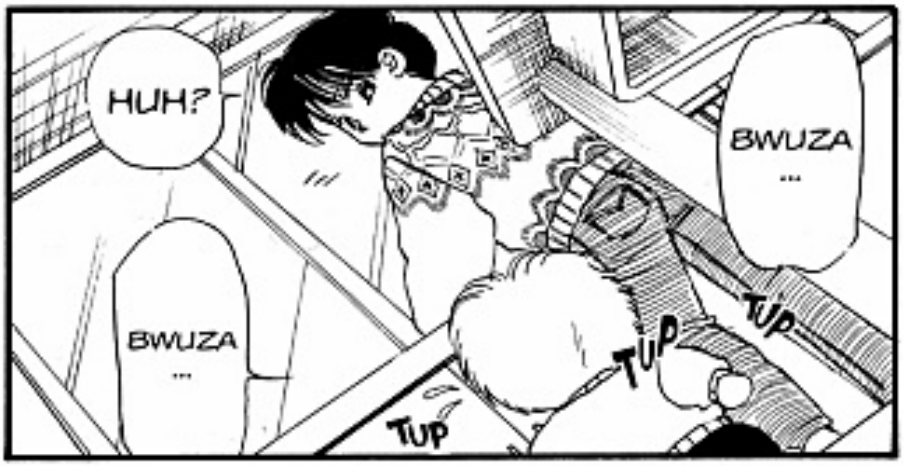
GA GA
YOU HAD YOURSELVES IN MIND WHEN YOU BOUGHT IT?
I GOT ENOUGH CAKE FOR ALL OF US. AREN'T YOU GOING TO OFFER US SOME TEA?
WHAT? AREN'T YOU GOING HOME?
MINORU, YOU MUST FEEL JUST LIKE A BIG BROTHER.
...I THINK HE'S HUNGRY.
I'D BETTER FEED HIM.
OH...
I'LL FIX HIS FORMULA.
HUH?

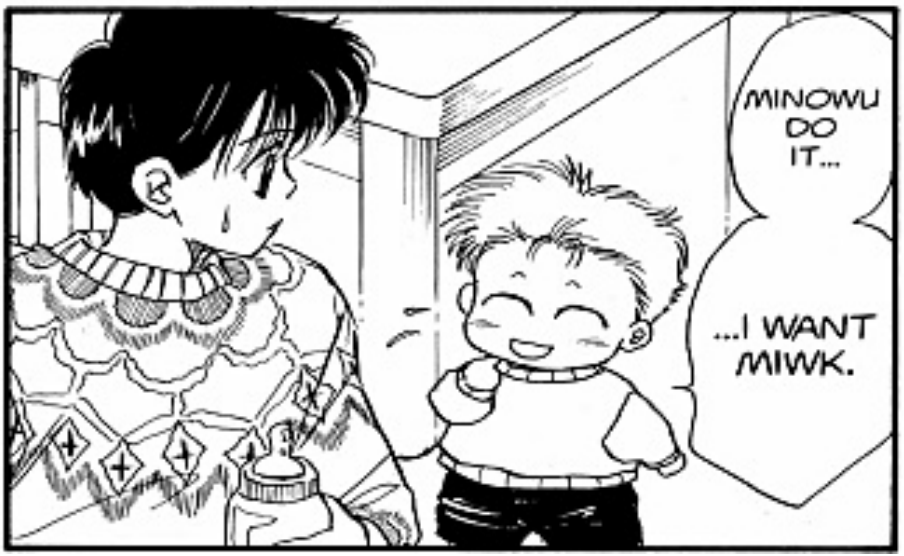
...

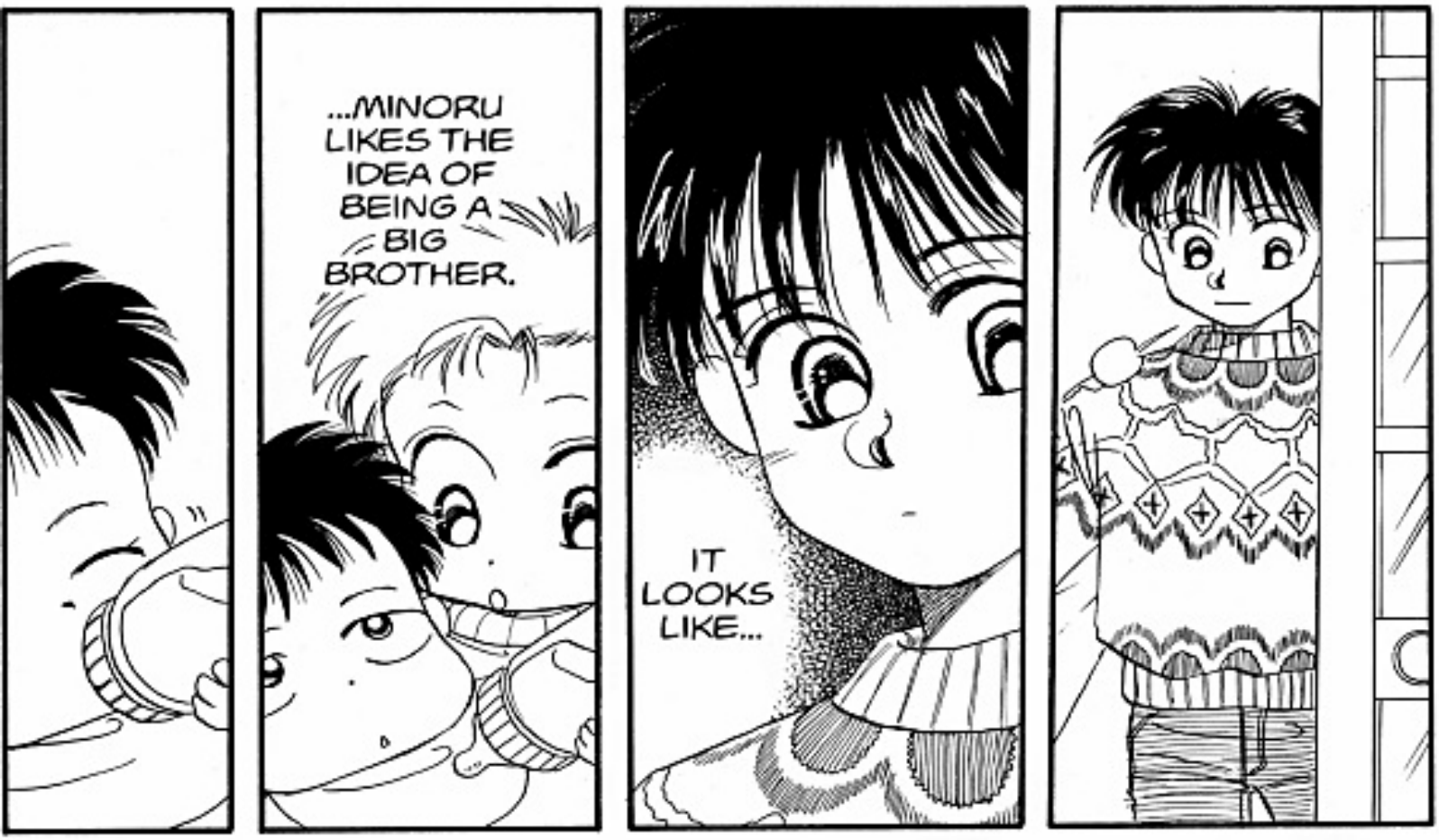

BIG BWUZA?
THAT'S RIGHT. WILL YOU BE TAICHI'S BIG BROTHER?

HEY, BIG BROTHER! YOU'RE NUMBER ONE!!
THAT'S LAYING IT ON KINDA THICK.

I GIVE...
MINO...


HUH?
BWUZA ...
BWUZA ...
TUP
TUP
TUP


MINOWU DO IT...
...I WANT MIWK.



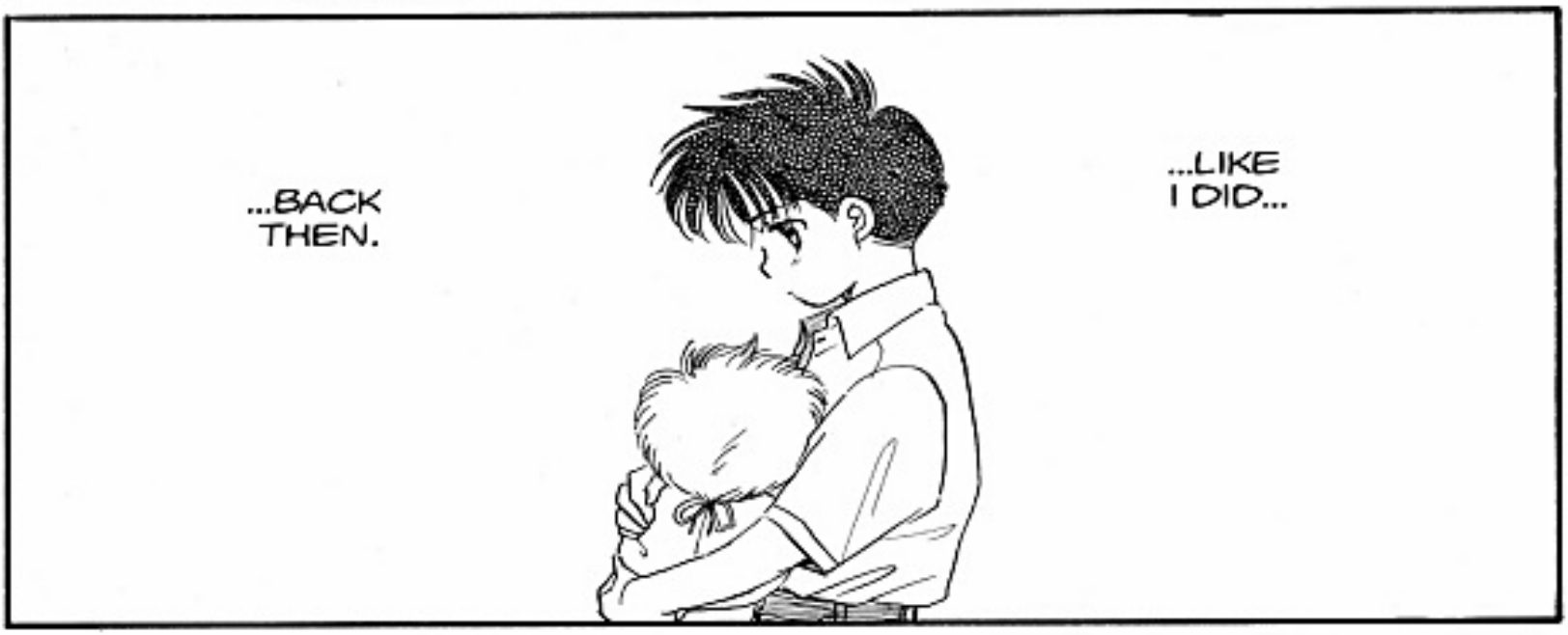
HE FEELS IMPORTANT...

...LIKE HE'S BIGGER...

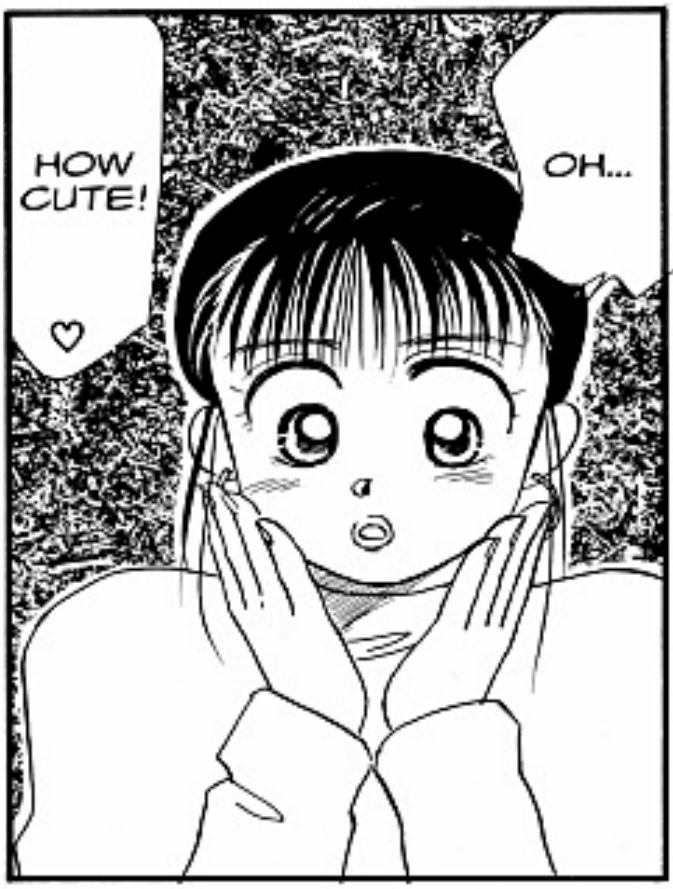
...AND STRONGER.

THAT WARM FEELING BUBBLES UP INSIDE...

I WONDER IF MINORU FEELS IT...

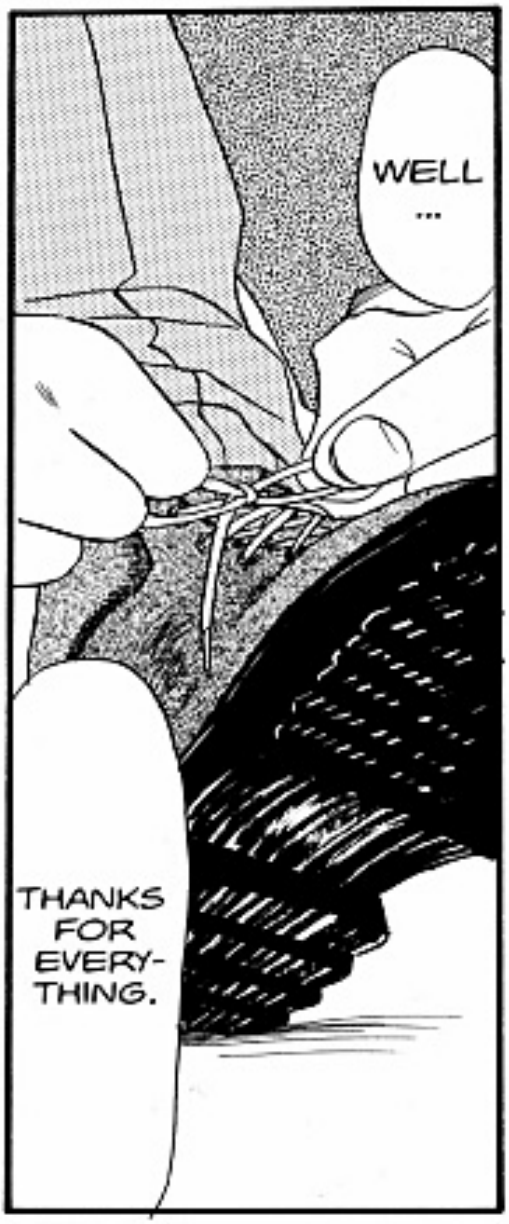

...BACK THEN.
...LIKE I DID...

HARUMI!! GET THE CAMERA! THE CAMERA!!
SEIICHI, ISN'T THAT ADORABLE?!


HOW CUTE!
OH...

I WAS NEVER THAT BAD.
DON'T WORRY, TAKUYA, I DIDN'T SAY SILLY STUFF LIKE THAT!!
KLIK
SAY "MAYON-NAISE"!!

TAICHI...
...SAY BYE-BYE TO MINORU.
TAKE CARE. OF COURSE, YOU'RE RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET...


WELL ...
THANKS FOR EVERY-THING.

GA GA

UH...

B-B-
WAP
UH?
BYE-BYE.
SWUFF-
SWUFF
AK
A
GR
A

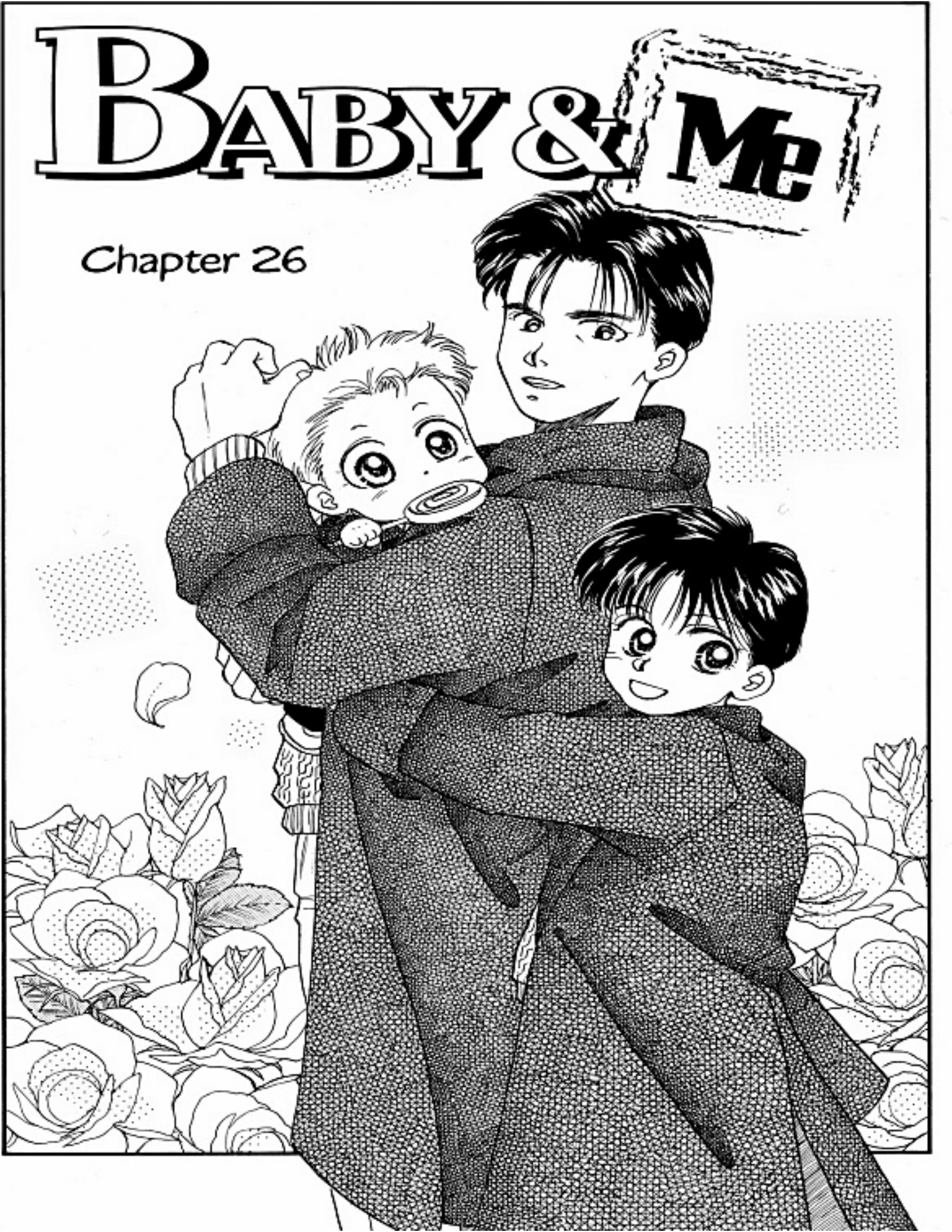
GRAAH
GRAAH
...
GRAAH
BUT HE ALMOST NEVER CRIES!!
SEIICHI! TAICHI'S CRYING!
GRAAH
BUT ...
UH?
...HE DOESN'T WANT TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOU, MINO-RU.
I THINK ...

HO-HUM. I HAVE TO GO BACK TO WORK TOMORROW.
AND THE MORNINGS ARE SO COLD...
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
HE SOUNDS LIKE A DINOSAUR.
YEAH.
GRAAH
DAD ...
...IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS VOICE?
I THINK HE'S TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
HE WANTS YOUR ATTEN-TION.
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT IS IT, MINORU?
HUH?
...
PLUNK

...
AHHH!!
I WANT SOME TOO!!
BUT I WISH HE'D STAY JUST THE WAY HE IS.
PEEL YOUR OWN ORANGE.
YOU'RE A BIG BROTHER NOW, MINORU.
HMPH
DOOM!!
IS THAT SELFISH OF ME?
IF YOU ASK ME...
...MINORU'S ONE SPOILED KID.

BABY & Me

Chapter 26



...
TAKE IT, YOU THIEF! THE CARROTS ARE FREE.
REALLY? THEN I'LL TAKE SOME ONIONS AND CARROTS, TOO.

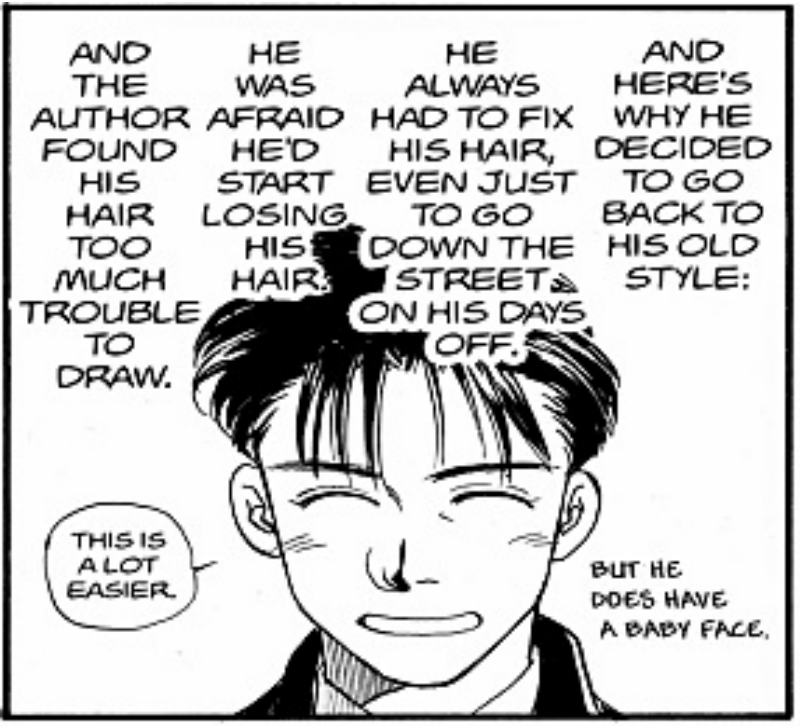
HARUMI, YOU'RE SO HANDSOME! I'LL GIVE YOU A DISCOUNT.
DID YOU SAY "MISS"?
Hee
Hee

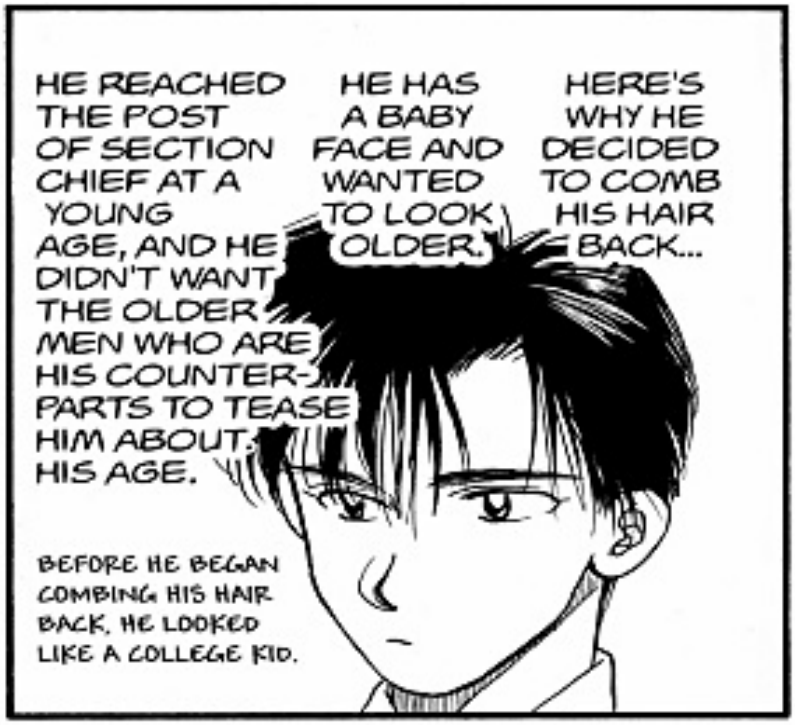
MISS...

I'D LIKE THESE ORANGES.

DAD...
...IS STRANGELY POPULAR WITH OLDER WOMEN.

MINORU, WE'RE HAVING CURRY TONIGHT.
DAD JUST GOT A HAIRCUT.
WICE AN' CUWWY!


AND THE AUTHOR FOUND HIS HAIR TOO MUCH TROUBLE TO DRAW.
HE WAS AFRAID HE'D START LOSING HIS HAIR.
HE ALWAYS HAD TO FIX HIS HAIR, EVEN JUST TO GO DOWN THE STREET ON HIS DAYS OFF.
AND HERE'S WHY HE DECIDED TO GO BACK TO HIS OLD STYLE:
THIS IS A LOT EASIER.
BUT HE DOES HAVE A BABY FACE.

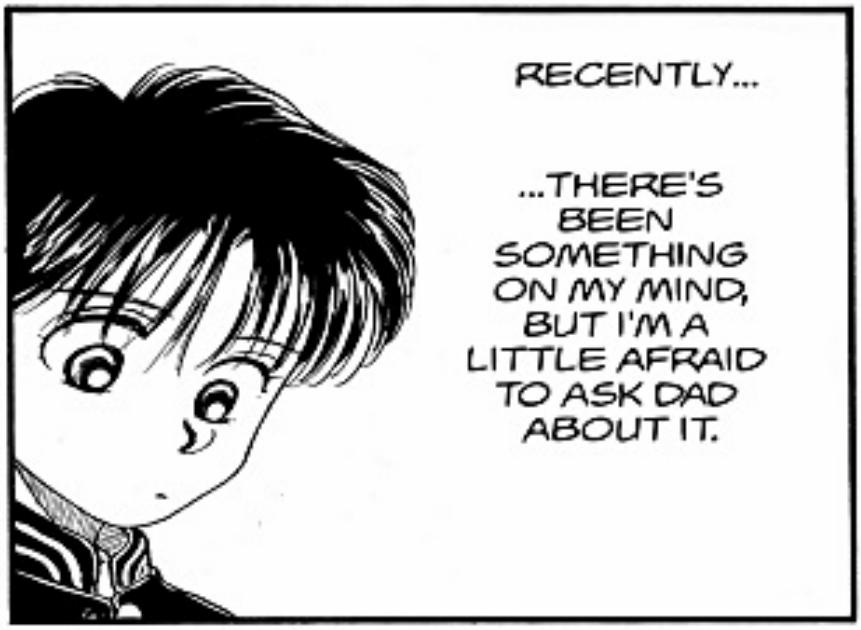

HE REACHED THE POST OF SECTION CHIEF AT A YOUNG AGE, AND HE DIDN'T WANT THE OLDER MEN WHO ARE HIS COUNTER-PARTS TO TEASE HIM ABOUT HIS AGE.
HE HAS A BABY FACE AND WANTED TO LOOK OLDER.
HERE'S WHY HE DECIDED TO COMB HIS HAIR BACK...
BEFORE HE BEGAN COMBING HIS HAIR BACK, HE LOOKED LIKE A COLLEGE KID.

DIS IS HEBBY ...
GOSH, YOU'RE ONLY CARRY-ING THE MILK!

WHEN I FIRST MET HER..
I THOUGHT SHE WAS ABOUT 16.
BUT SHE WAS 18.
SHE DID?

YOUR MOTHER HAD A BABY FACE, TOO.

YOU LIKE CURRY, DON'T YOU, MINORU?
YEP.
IT'S THE REASON SEIICHI SAID THAT DAD AND MOM GOT MARRIED.

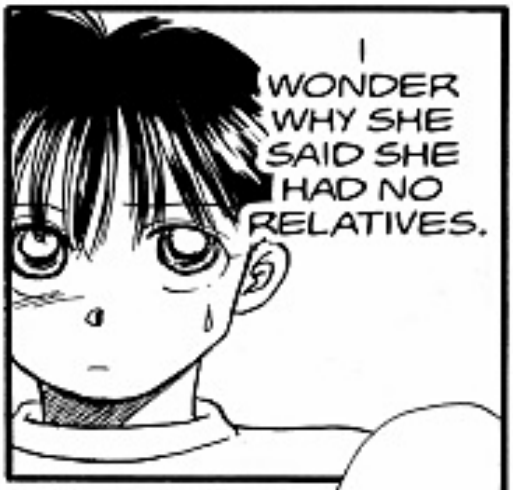

RECENTLY...
...THERE'S BEEN SOMETHING ON MY MIND, BUT I'M A LITTLE AFRAID TO ASK DAD ABOUT IT.

HEY ...
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT "KNOCKED UP" MEANS...
THERE'S A CAR PARKED IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE.
IT WAS BECAUSE HARUMI...
...KNOCKED UP YUKAKO.
?
OH.
VREEE
KNOCK
KNOCK
IT'S IN THE WAY...
WHAT'S THIS?

I'VE SEEN YOU SEVERAL TIMES...
I DON'T KNOW.
DAD, WHO IS SHE?
ACTUALLY, I NEVER WANTED TO MEET YOU.
...BUT YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ME BEFORE.
CHAK
THAT WAS PROBABLY TRUE FOR YOU, TOO.
YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR HAIR.
YOU LOOK DIFFERENT FROM THE PICTURE.
HOW DO YOU DO?
UM...

BUT I THOUGHT...
...MOM DIDN'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES.
... FUJIKO OSAKA.
I'M YUKAKO'S AUNT...
DING
HUH?
OH, SURE.
WOULD YOU ALLOW ME TO LIGHT SOME INCENSE AT THE ALTAR FOR YUKAKO?
...DON'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES ...
...SO...
YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY...
CURVES

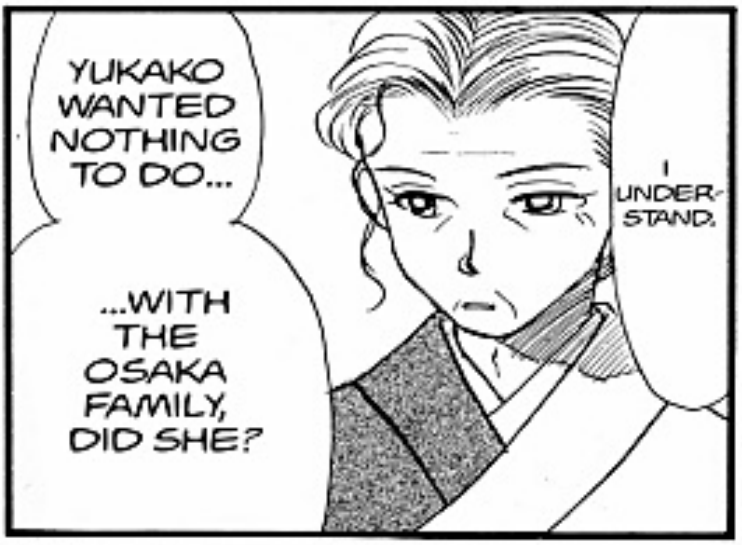
IT'S BEEN THIRTEEN YEARS.


I WONDER WHY SHE SAID SHE HAD NO RELATIVES.

YUKAKO... THAT GIRL...
...PRACTICALLY RAN AWAY FROM OUR HOME.

...IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO US...
...YOU TWO HAVE TO DEPEND ON EACH OTHER.

I'M...
...SORRY ABOUT THAT.


I UNDERSTAND.
YUKAKO WANTED NOTHING TO DO...
...WITH THE OSAKA FAMILY, DID SHE?

IN ALL THAT TIME, THE ONLY NEWS WE RECEIVED...
...WAS THE NOTICE OF HER DEATH.

IT'S TIME WE GOT DOWN TO THE REAL REASON FOR THIS VISIT.
SIP
NOW THEN...
NO THANK YOU. I CAN'T DRINK IT TOO HOT.
WOULD YOU LIKE A FRESH CUP OF TEA?
SHE NEVER LISTENED TO ANYTHING I SAID.
...JUST LIKE HER MOTHER. SUCH A PAIN...
SHE WAS A WILLFUL CHILD...
SIGH
MY...
YOUR SONS LOOK VERY INTELLIGENT.
STARE
?
UH?
HUH?
HEY, JUST HOLD ON!
BUT THESE TWO...
I WASN'T SURE WHAT I'D DO IF THEY'D BEEN UNMANAGE-ABLE CHILDREN...

MY HUSBAND'S FAMILY IS IN LINE TO INHERIT THE POSITION OF GRAND MASTER OF THE AOYAGI SCHOOL OF JAPANESE DANCE.
THERE IS ANOTHER REASON I CAME.
WELL, THEN JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT.
I DID.
I THOUGHT YOU CAME TO SAY A PRAYER FOR YUKAKO!
...THE PERSONS WITH THE NEXT CLAIM TO THAT POSITION ARE YUKAKO AND HER—
NO.
WHAT DOES "INHERIT" MEAN?
HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO HEIR.
THERE-FORE...
UH...
ARE YOU HAZAMA KANPEI?!
YOU'RE DOING THIS ON PURPOSE!
I'M LOST.
WHY?
WHY?
WHY? THIS IS A SERIOUS MATTER!
NOW, YOU MUST LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
NO.
NO? BUT I HAVEN'T FINISHED EXPLAINING ...

*HAZAMA KANPEI IS A JAPANESE COMEDIAN KNOWN FOR MONOSYLLABIC ANSWERS.

WOULD YOU PLEASE LEAVE NOW?!
IT'S DARK OUT, SO...
GRIN
GRIN
GRR ...
ANY-WAY...
DON'T THINK I'M GIVING UP!!
THAT'S DAD'S SALES-MAN'S SMILE.
...
GRIN
GRIN
GRIN
HMPH ...
...HE'S SO CALM, IT'S UNNERV-ING.
I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE EASY, BUT...

IN...
IN-HERIT...
IN...
...HER...
FWUP
FWUP
I WANT TO ASK HIM ABOUT THAT LADY, BUT...
"TO RECEIVE PROPERTY OR TITLE FROM AN ANCESTOR OR OTHER PERSON BY LEGAL SUCCESSION OR WILL." SO, WHAT?
HERE IT IS.
RAGAWA PUBLISH JAPAN DICTIO
KLANK
KLANK
I'M A LITTLE AFRAID TO.
IT WAS BE-CAUSE HARU-MI...
...KNOCKED UP YUKAKO.
BA-BUMP
FWUP
BA-BUMP
FWUP
...YOUR PARENTS GOT MARRIED?
...DO YOU KNOW WHY...
RAGAWA PUBLISHING JAPANESE DICTIONA

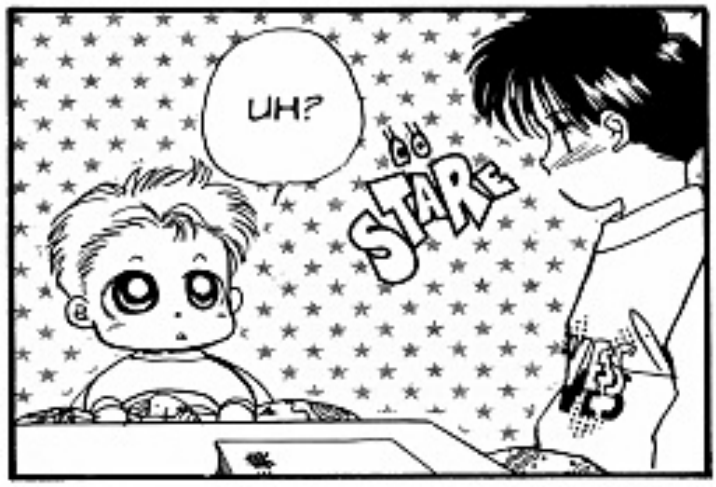
BA-BUMP

FWUP
IT'S A VERB, RIGHT?
"TO KNOCK UP"?

IS IT A BAD THING?
BA-BUMP
FWUP

TAKUYA ...
WHAT?!
WH
AW

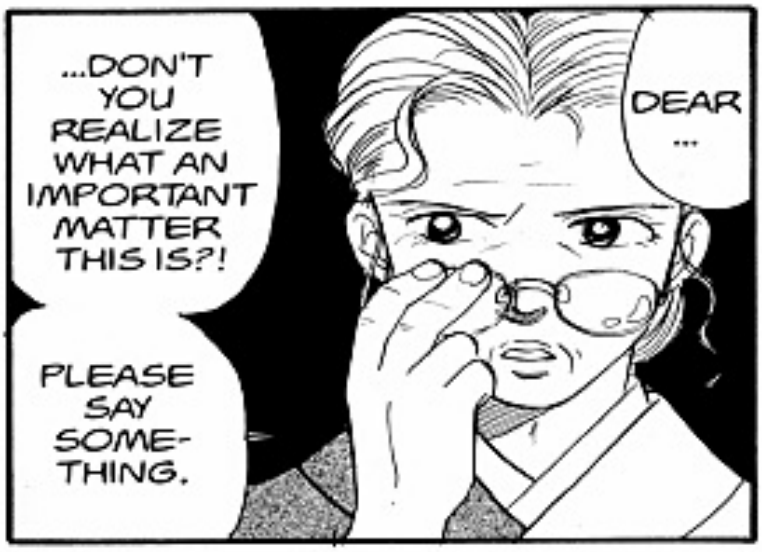
O-OKAY.
HUH? THE CURRY'S READY. WOULD YOU CLEAR OFF THE TABLE?


UH?
STARE

KNOCK UP
v. TO MAKE
PREGNA
KNOCKW
N. A SHO
SEASON
KNOLL
N. *·* A
MALL
KNO
N. A
OR
BA-BUMP

TODAY ... I WENT TO HAVE A LOOK...
...AT YUKAKO'S CHILDREN.

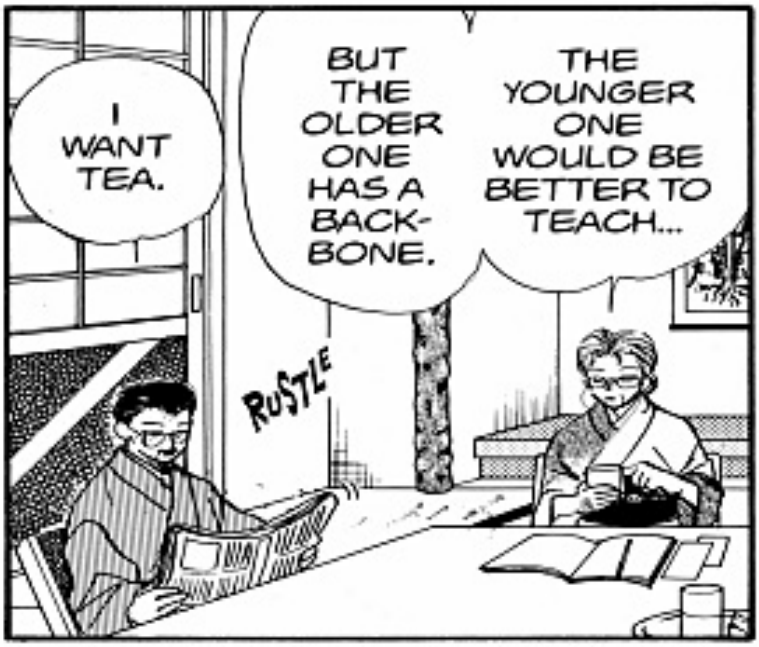
MINORU'S LUCKY. HE DOESN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING.
HEE ...
SNUFF SNUFF
CURVE CURVE


DEAR ...
...DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT AN IMPORTANT MATTER THIS IS?!
PLEASE SAY SOME-THING.

TEA.

THAT'S NOT WHAT...
BLUP BLUP BLUP

EH?
WAS YUKAKO HAPPY?


I WANT TEA.
BUT THE OLDER ONE HAS A BACK-BONE.
THE YOUNGER ONE WOULD BE BETTER TO TEACH...
RUSTLE

SHEESH ... WOMEN ARE SCARY.
I'LL DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO DO, NO MATTER HOW DESPIC-ABLE.
WE'VE GOT TO PRODUCE AN HEIR.
WHAM
...I'M TALKING ABOUT NOW!!
GOODBYE.
IT SUCKS TO HAVE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL ON SUCH A COLD MORNING, HUH?
GOOD MORNING.
DON'T YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK, SEIICHI?
I WORK EVENINGS.
THE RESTAURANT HAS SEVERAL SHIFTS.
KLAK
HEY.
IT'S COLD ...
I CAN SEE MY BREATH.

Author's Note Part 5

Record of Yoshizo's Growth

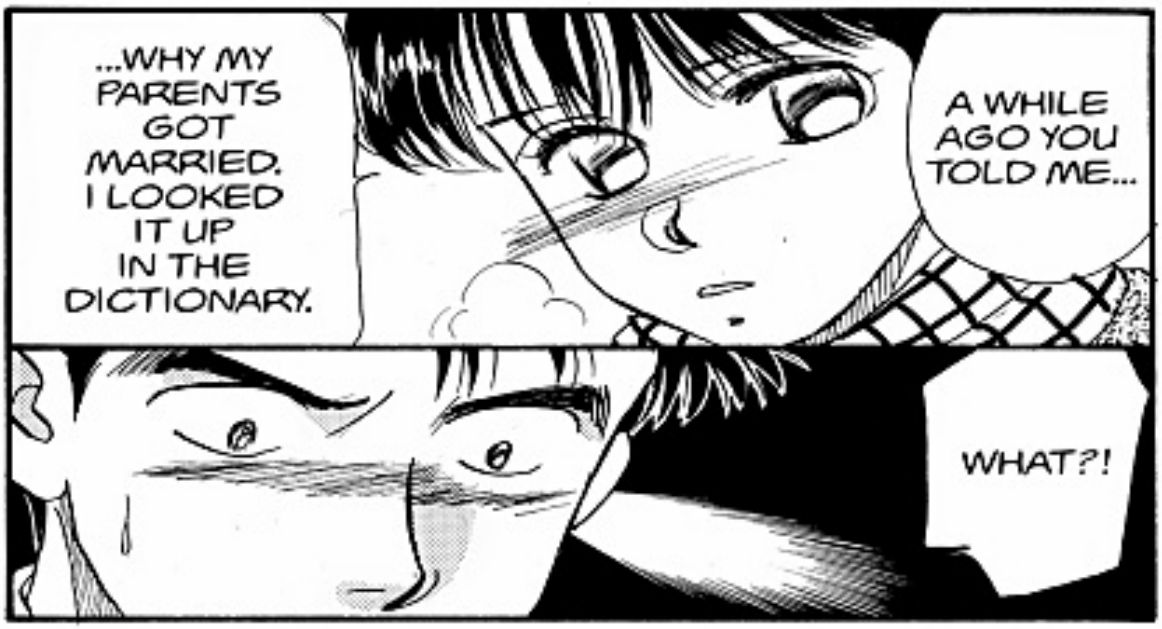
The day I bought him...
...he fit in one hand.

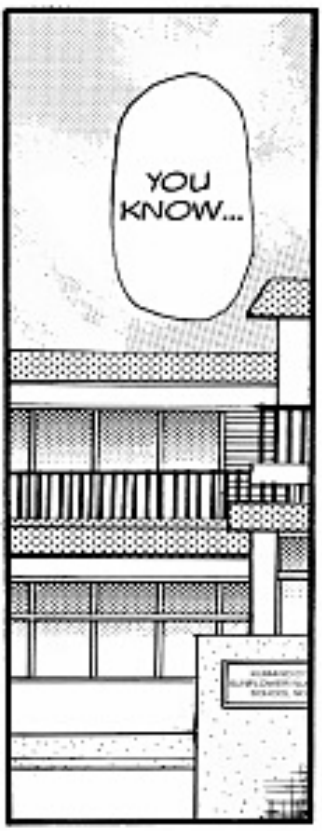
One month later...
...he spilled out of my hand.

After three months...
...he fit in two hands.

After six months...
...I had to spread my hands to carry him.

After one year...
...I had to carry him like a baby.



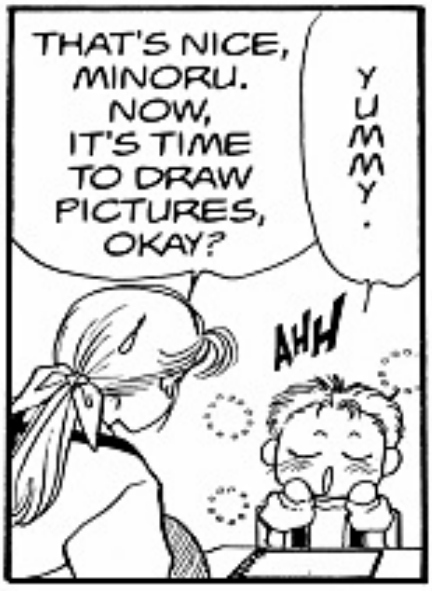

YOU KNOW...

UGHHHH!
MINORU'S LUCKY, HE'S A TYPE B.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M A TYPE A PERSON.
HMM...

I KNOW THAT I SHOULDN'T...
...LET IT BOTHER ME, BUT...

YOU DID.
WHO SAID THAT?!

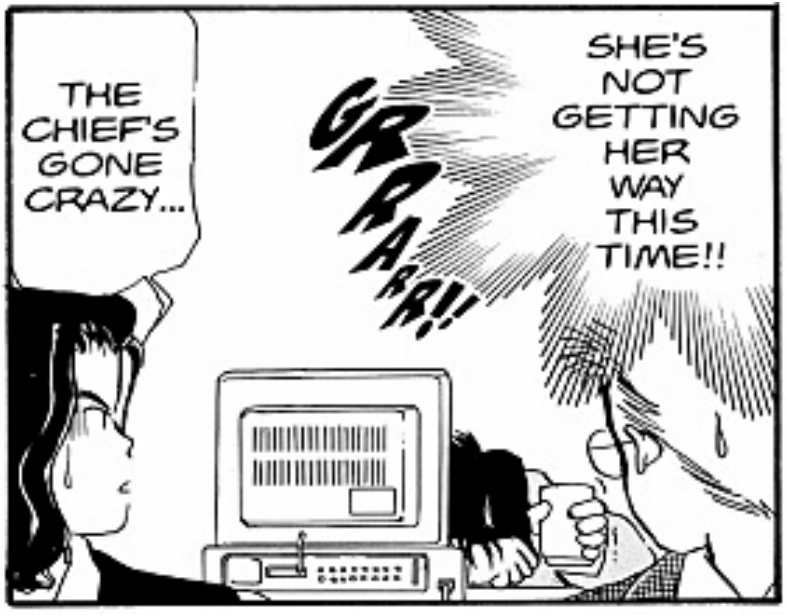
OH. YES?
UM... EXCUSE ME.

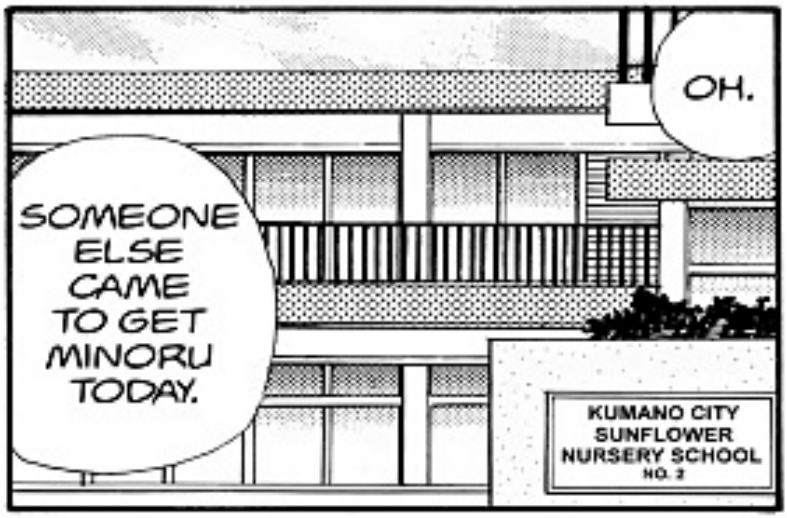

THAT'S NICE, MINORU. NOW, IT'S TIME TO DRAW PICTURES, OKAY?
YUMMY.
AHH

DA WICE 'UZ WEALLY GOOD.
I EAT WICE AN' CUWWY YESSUHDAY.
YOU KNOW ...

I'M HERE TO PICK UP MINORU ENOKI.
OH?

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY.
I'M HIS MOTHER'S AUNT.
JUST ASK MINORU.
I'M SORRY, BUT WHAT IS YOUR RELATION TO MI-NORU?
I SEE.
I CAN ONLY GET OUT IN THE MORNINGS, I'M AFRAID.
IT'S NOT EVEN NOON.
TO PICK HIM UP? BUT IT'S VERY EARLY.
YES, WELL ...
SEE?
STARE
YEP.
NOD
MINORU, YOU KNOW WHO I AM, DON'T YOU?
UH?
SHE'S THE AUNT YUKAKO TOLD ME ABOUT...
WIZZ
WIZZ
WIZZ


THE CHIEF'S GONE CRAZY...
GRRARR!!
SHE'S NOT GETTING HER WAY THIS TIME!!


OH.
SOMEONE ELSE CAME TO GET MINORU TODAY.
KUMANO CITY SUNFLOWER NURSERY SCHOOL NO. 2

...WHO WAS ALWAYS FINDING FAULT WITH HER...
...WHO WAS ALWAYS PUSHING PEOPLE AROUND...
...WHO GOT FURIOUS WHEN THINGS DIDN'T GO HER WAY...
...AND NEVER CARED ABOUT ANYONE ELSE'S FEELINGS.
BUT I HAVE NEWS FOR HER...

DON'T YOU KNOW HER? HAS MINORU BEEN KIDNAPPED?!
I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE, BUT MINORU SEEMED TO KNOW HER.
I KNOW WHO SHE COULD BE.

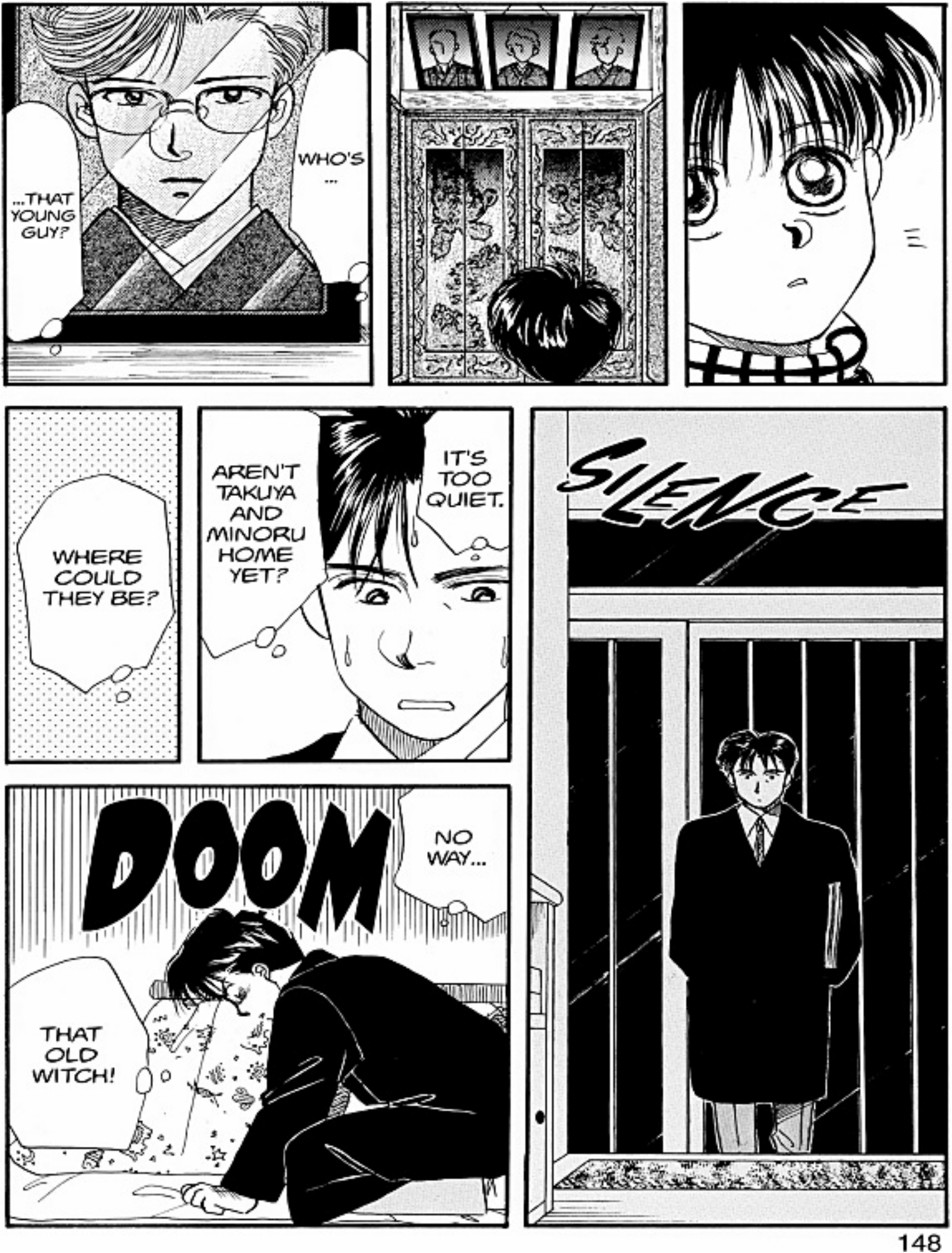
WHAT TIME DID SHE COME?
SHE SAID SHE WAS YOUR AUNT.
IT WAS A MIDDLE-AGED LADY IN A KIMONO.
BEFORE NOON.

MAYBE IT WAS YOUR DAD?
HUH? SOMEONE ELSE?

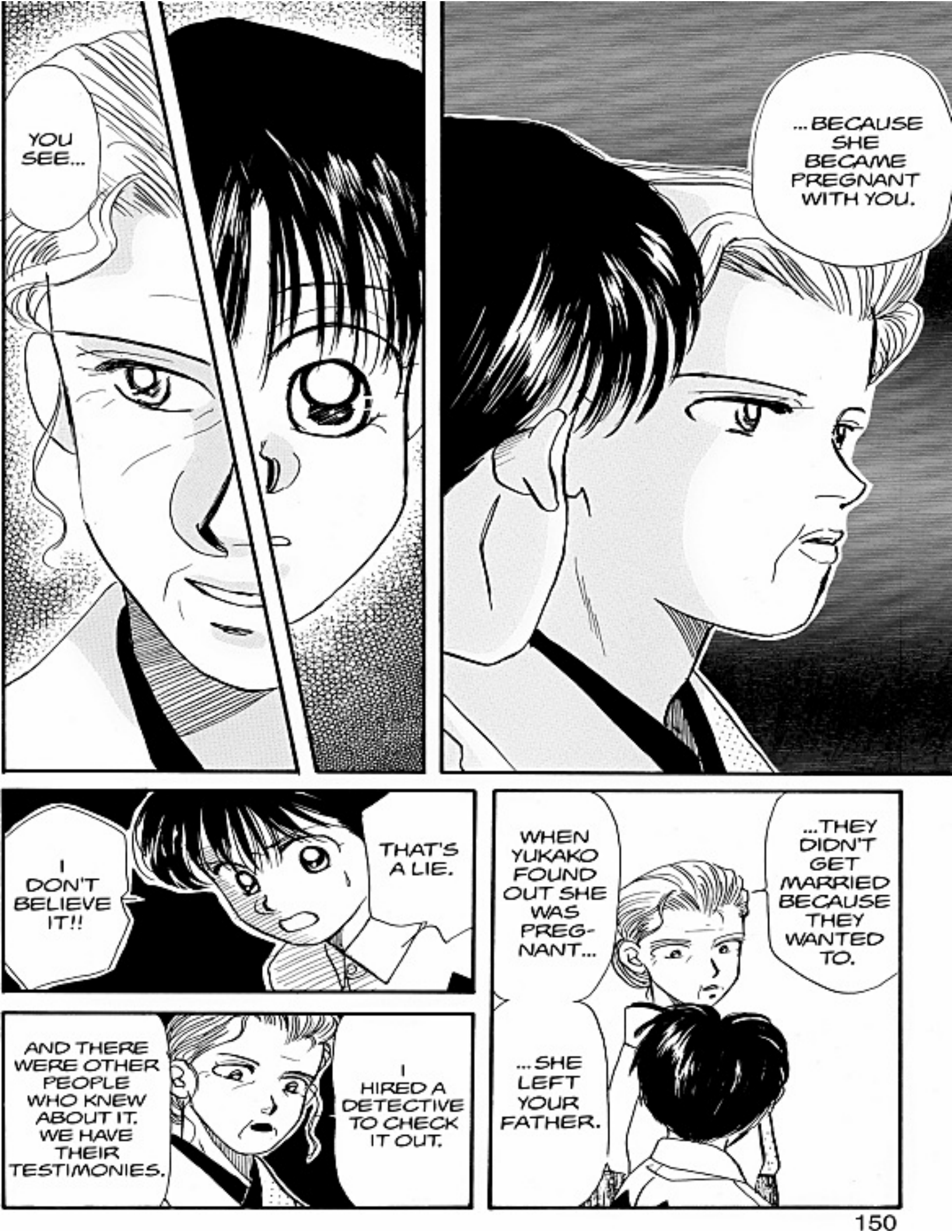
HEY, TAKUYA...
...THERE'S A LADY IN A KIMONO OVER THERE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE LIVES.
SHE'S MY MOTHER'S AUNT, SO...
...WHAT WOULD THAT MAKE HER TO US?
YOU HAVE AN AUNT, TAKUYA?
YOU NEVER TOLD ME.
KIAK
I'M GOING TO GET MINORU AND THEN WE'RE GOING HOME.
WH-WHY DID YOU TAKE MINORU?
I WANTED HIM TO COME FOR A VISIT.
SO IT WAS YOU!
I'D LIKE YOU TO COME TOO.
THAT'S ALL.
HE'S AT MY HOUSE, CRYING.
UM... WHERE'S MINORU?

HUH?
GON...
GET IN THE CAR.
ALL RIGHT.
OKAY ...?
OGAY.
...SEE YOU AT SCHOOL ON MONDAY.
WELL...
BWAAH
BWAAH
BWAAH
TAKUYA SEEMED A LITTLE DOWN TODAY.
VROOM

BWAAH
BWAAH
SUCH ENERGY!
HE'S STILL CRYING?
MRS. OSAKA ...
OH.
PLEASE STOP CRYING!
LOOK AT THE FUNNY FACE!
I'M EXHAUST-ED...
IT'S NO GOOD ...
DADDY ...
BWUZA ...
BWAAH
...
WAAH!!
BWUZA!!
MINORU!
OH...
GRIN
TAKUYA, SINCE YOU'RE HERE, WON'T YOU TAKE A LOOK AT OUR DANCE STUDIO?


...THAT YOUNG GUY?
WHO'S ...
WHERE COULD THEY BE?
AREN'T TAKUYA AND MINORU HOME YET?
IT'S TOO QUIET.
SILENCE
DOOM
NO WAY...
THAT OLD WITCH!

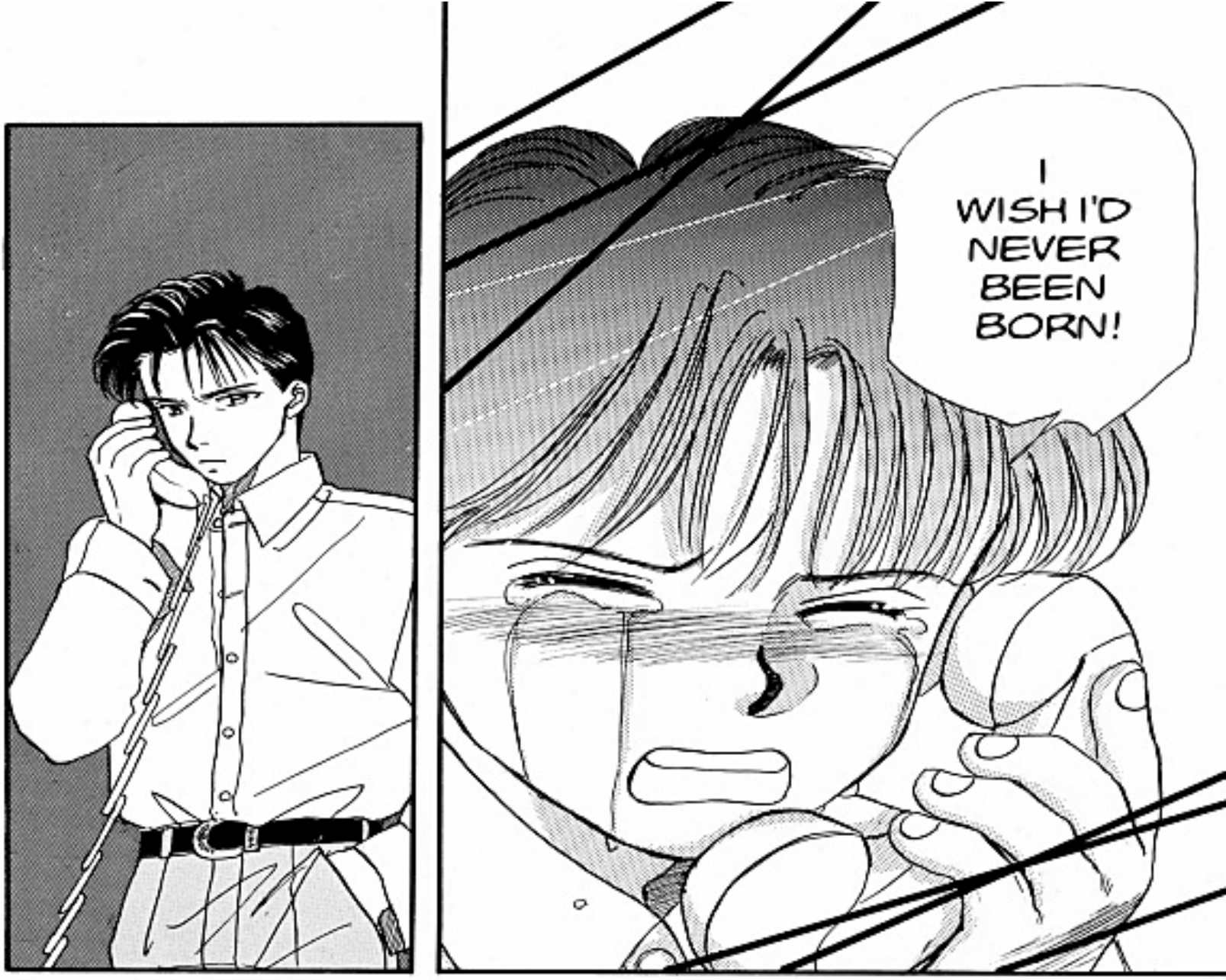
WELL, DO YOU FIND IT INTER-ESTING?
UM... YES.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT?
SHE ALWAYS SEEMED HAPPY.
...TO WIN THIS ONE OVER.
IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFI-CULT...
I WONDER IF YUKAKO WAS HAPPY BEING MARRIED TO YOUR FATHER.
IS THAT SO? I SUPPOSE SHE RESIGNED HERSELF TO IT.
RESIGNED HERSELF?
WELL, THE FACT IS THAT THEY GOT MARRIED...


YOU SEE...
...BECAUSE SHE BECAME PREGNANT WITH YOU.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!!
THAT'S A LIE.
AND THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE WHO KNEW ABOUT IT. WE HAVE THEIR TESTIMONIES.
I HIRED A DETECTIVE TO CHECK IT OUT.
WHEN YUKAKO FOUND OUT SHE WAS PREG-NANT...
...THEY DIDN'T GET MARRIED BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO.
...SHE LEFT YOUR FATHER.

HUH? BUT...
WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE TONIGHT?
I'LL LAY OUT HIS BED-DING.
TOMOR-ROW'S SATURDAY. YOU DON'T HAVE SCHOOL, DO YOU?
SHE'S WRONG.
IT HAS TO BE A LIE...
BWUZA... I SEEPY.
WILL YOU GO HOME NOW, KNOWING THAT THEY DIDN'T REALLY WANT YOU?
1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9
* 0 #
RING
RING
KLK
HELLO, THIS IS ENOKI.
DAD?
IS THAT YOU, TAKUYA? WHERE ARE YOU?
AT MOM'S AUNT'S HOUSE.

WERE YOU REALLY HAPPY?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WHAT'S WRONG?
OF COURSE I WAS HAPPY, BUT...
...WERE YOU HAPPY?
DAD, WHEN I WAS BORN...
WHAT?
...
WHAT ...
...ARE YOU DOING THERE?
WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME? WHAT STATION IS NEAR HER HOUSE?
I WANT TO BELIEVE DAD, BUT...
I CAN'T GET AUNTIE'S WORDS OUT OF MY HEAD.
TAKUYA?
...

TAKUYA...
WHY NOT?
I DON'T WANT TO COME HOME.
I...
THOSE TWO GOT MARRIED...
...BECAUSE SHE BECAME PREGNANT WITH YOU.
AND I'LL BUY MINORU A TRICYCLE!
WELL, I'LL BUY YOU THAT MOUNTAIN BIKE!!
DID SHE BUY YOU A TOY OR SOME-THING?
WHAT?
DAD...
I KNOW THE TRUTH NOW.

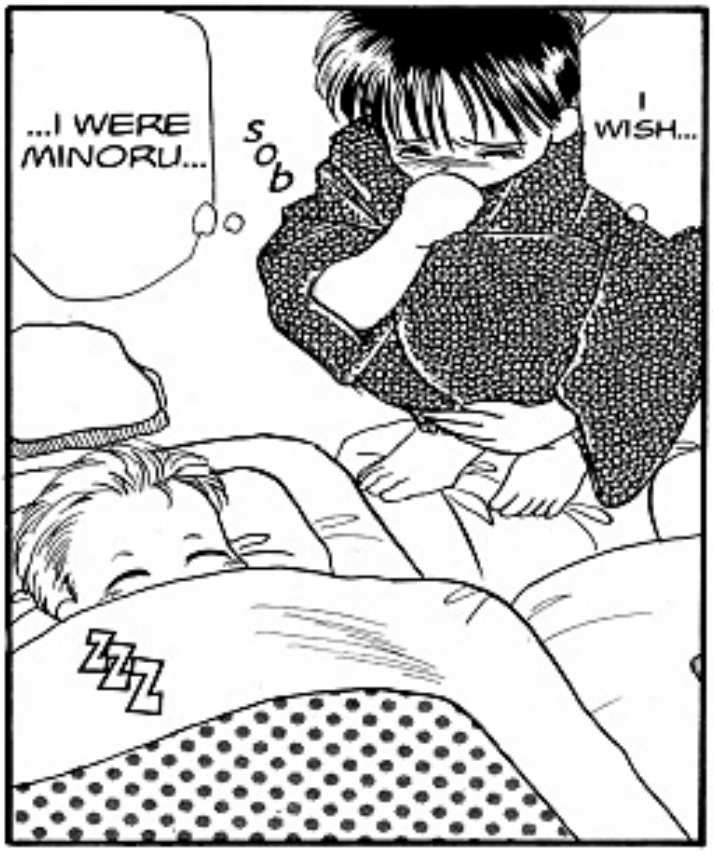

I WISH I'D NEVER BEEN BORN!

YOU CAN COME HOME ON YOUR OWN!!

IF YOU LIKE THAT OLD WOMAN SO MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU STAY THERE?
SNIFF
I'M NOT COMING TO GET YOU!

TAKUYA ...
IT WOULD BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S HEART TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.

DAD...
D...
PLUP
SOB
HE'S MAD AT ME.
NAA NAA NAA
KI AM
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT ...
...I'D GET SUCH QUICK RESULTS SO EASILY.
WELL ...
DAD...
SOB
Hic
...GOT MAD...



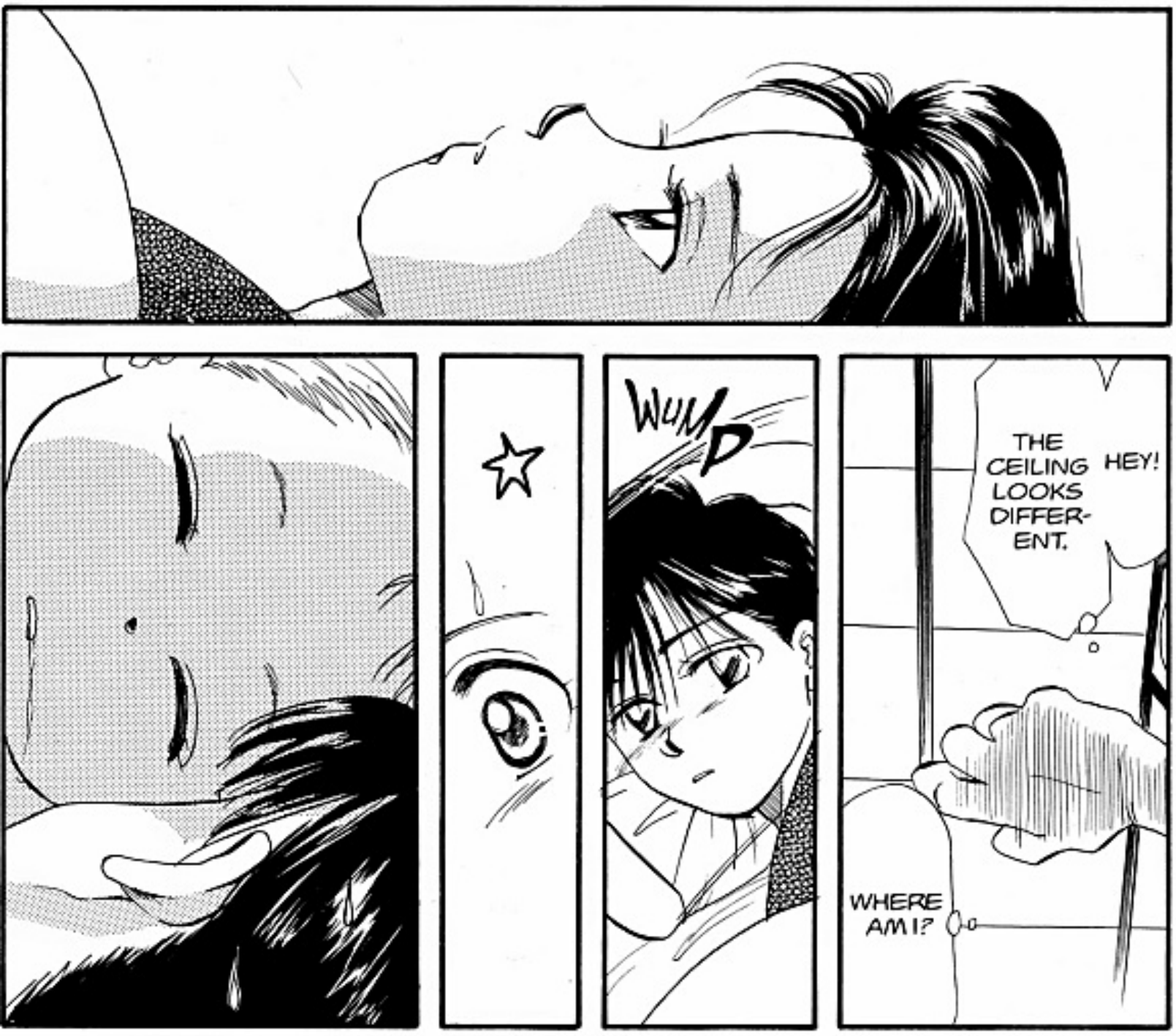
CHAPTER 26 / THE END

BABY & Me

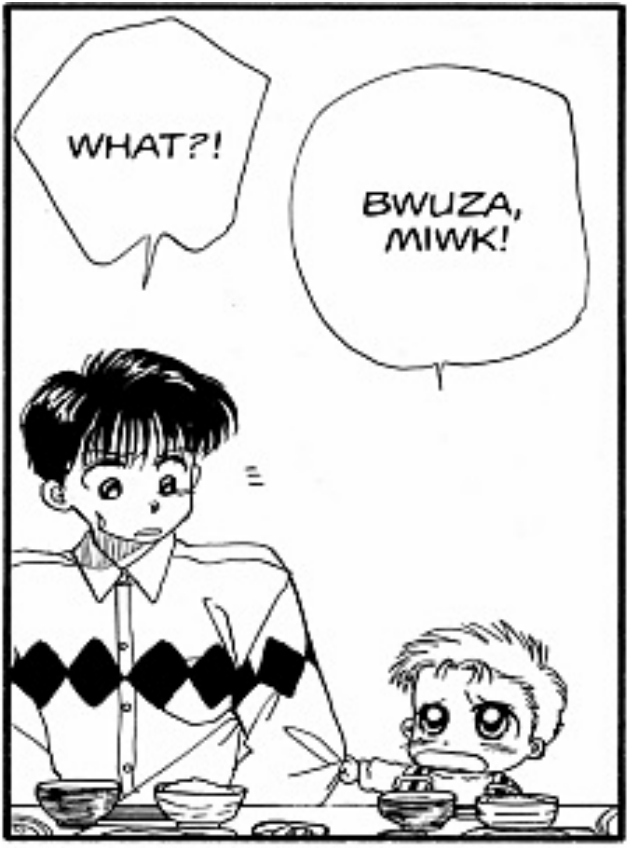
Chapter 27

...KNOWING THAT THEY DIDN'T REALLY WANT YOU?

WILL YOU GO HOME NOW...



WE SLEPT OVER AT MOM'S AUNT'S HOUSE.
OH, YEAH ...
I'M NOT COMING TO GET YOU!
YOU CAN COME HOME ON YOUR OWN!!
...
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
GEEZ! HE SCARED ME.
MINO-RU ...
...BECAUSE I SAID THAT...
I WISH I'D NEVER BEEN BORN!!
...BECAUSE I SAID...
DAD'S MAD AT ME...
SNIK
BLUP
GOOD MORN-ING.
DID YOU SLEEP WELL?


WHAT?!
BWUZA, MIWK!

STARE

GOOD MORNING.
WE SLEPT VERY WELL, THANKS.
GOO' MOW-NING.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

...
M-MINORU, BE PATIENT!!
I WAN' MIWK!!
WAAH

YES, I DO!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE MILK!!

MINORU, I'LL GIVE YOU MILK AFTER YOU'VE EATEN BREAKFAST.

HMPH!
ALL RIGHT. I'LL GET YOU SOME MILK.

NO.

HEE...
GLARE
...HE'LL GROW UP TO BE SELFISH.
IF YOU SPOIL HIM...
...
...
SOB SOB
GEEZ, MINORU...
GRUMBLE
I'VE GOT TO MANEUVER THINGS SO THAT WE CAN ADOPT HIM.
MUMBLE MUMBLE
TAKUYA'S THE ONE.
...BUT THE REASON-ABLE CHILD WOULD BE EASIER TO HANDLE.
THE LITTLE ONE MAY HAVE MORE POTEN-TIAL...
HMM...

MINORU, STOP CRYING!!
I'M SORRY, OKAY?
WAAH... SOB... SOB...
...
TADA!!
HE'S PROBABLY ACTING LIKE THIS BECAUSE I'M HERE.
MAYBE I HAVE SPOILED HIM.
I WISH ...
...I'D NEVER BEEN BORN.
WHY?
ENDO
CHAK
SIGH
KLK
...MAYBE HE'D GROW UP TO BE STRONG.
BUT IF I WEREN'T AROUND...
UB...

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU! HOW COME YOU'RE GOING TO WORK? IT'S SATURDAY!
SLAP SLAP
HUH?
SEIICHI?
WAIT A SECOND.
HUFF
I WONDER IF TAKUYA AND MINORU WILL COME HOME TODAY...
HARUMI!
WHAT DID YOU DO?
DON'T GET MAD, OKAY?
?
TELL ME WHAT?
WELL...
WELL...
...I THOUGHT I'D BETTER TELL YOU.
THE REA-SON?
THE REASON YOU AND YUKAKO GOT MARRIED.
I TOLD TAKUYA ABOUT... THAT THING.
WELL... UH...

I-I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BOTHER HIM SO MUCH!!
IT'S NOT SO UNUSUAL FOR PEOPLE TO GET MARRIED BECAUSE THERE'S A BABY COMING...
IT WAS THE SAME WITH US.
...THAT YOU GOT MARRIED 'CAUSE SHE WAS PREGNANT WITH TAKUYA.
THROB
THROB
YOU KNOW ...
WHAM
PHEW
I SEE.
...I WAS DEPRESSED. I JUST WANTED TO TEASE HIM A LITTLE...
SEE, WHEN I TOLD HIM...

THAT WITCH IS BEHIND THIS!!
UM...
BUT WHY WOULD TAKUYA GET SO UPSET OVER SOMETHING SEIICHI SAID?
OKAY, YOU'RE FOR-GIVEN.
OW OW...
THAT HURT...
...
YES?
WHERE'S AUNTIE?
EH? OH...
...THEY DIED IN A PLANE CRASH.
WHAT ABOUT HER PARENTS?
OUR MOM LIVED HERE, DIDN'T SHE?
SHE LEFT IN THE CAR A WHILE AGO. SHE SAID YOU SHOULD WAIT FOR HER TO COME BACK.

MOM...
...WAS MY AGE WHEN SHE LOST HER PARENTS?
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
YUKAKO'S MOTHER WAS MY YOUNGER SISTER.
HER PARENTS WERE ON A TRIP.
YUKAKO WAS ABOUT YOUR AGE.
WE WERE TOO STRICT WITH YUKAKO.
SHE ALWAYS SEEMED SO HAPPY...
YUKAKO CAME TO HATE THIS HOUSE.
WE FORCED HER TO DO WHAT WE WANTED.
SHE COULDN'T WAIT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE.

...A FAMILY OF HER OWN.
SHE ALWAYS WANTED...
I SHOULD HAVE LOVED MY SON MORE.
BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR REGRETS.
I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT EXPRESS-ING MY FEELINGS.
LOOKING AT YOU TWO...
...I'M SURE...
...THAT YUKAKO LOVED YOU AND YOUR FATHER VERY MUCH.
HIS SON?

I'M CHIEF ENOKI.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING ...
CHIEF, YOU HAVE A VISITOR.
ICHIKAWA SECURITIES
BANK
YOU COULD AT LEAST HIDE YOUR CONTEMPT A BIT.
IT'S NOTHING.
I JUST HAD SOME WORK TO DO.
...AT YOUR COMPANY, ISN'T IT?
I'M IMPRESSED. SATURDAY'S A DAY OFF...
COFFEE SHOP HANAYUME

Author's Note Part 6

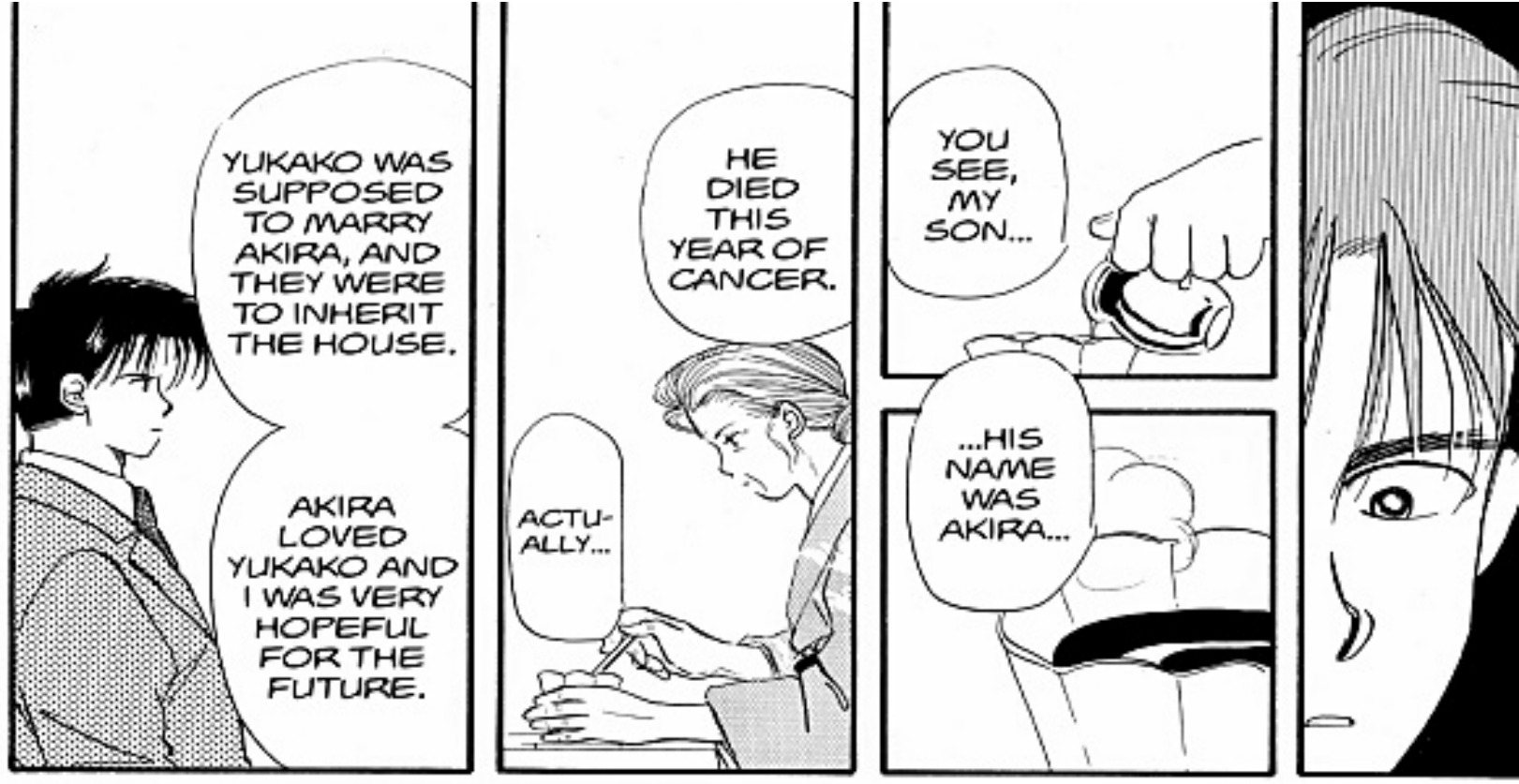
We've received hundreds of postcards with illustrations, 4-frame cartoons and funny anecdotes from fans. Thank you all very much. It made me so happy to feel the love of my readers. Thank you all.

Well...

See you in Volume 6!!

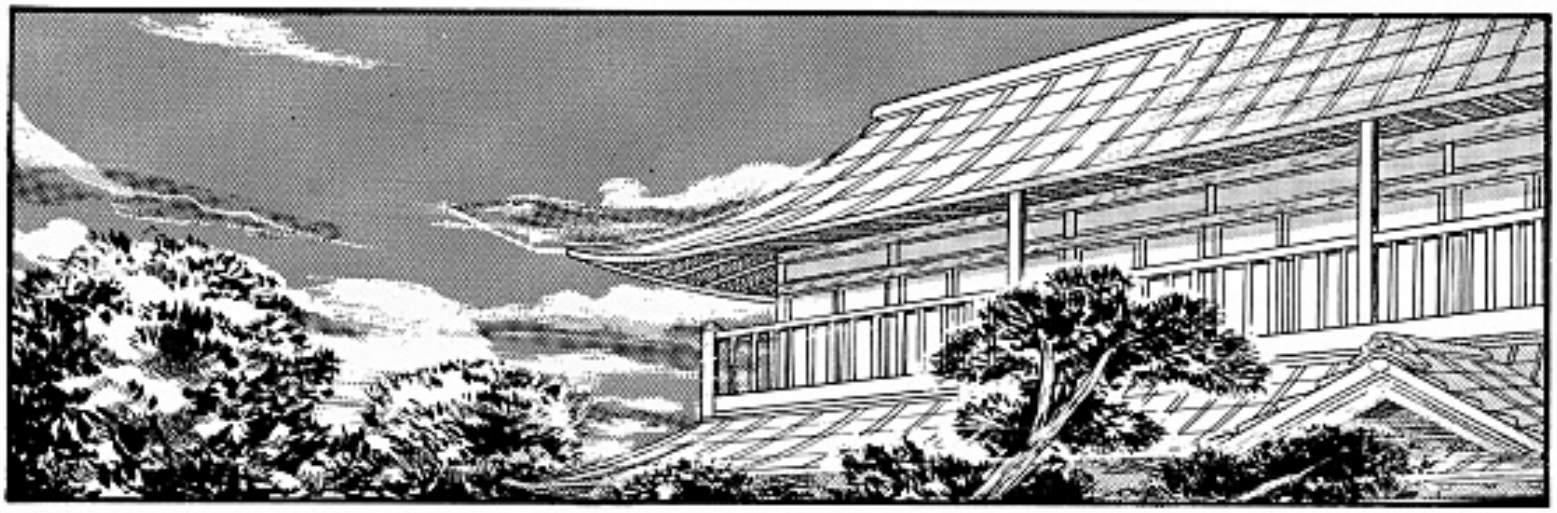
Goodbye!

Marimo


YUKAKO WAS SUPPOSED TO MARRY AKIRA, AND THEY WERE TO INHERIT THE HOUSE.
AKIRA LOVED YUKAKO AND I WAS VERY HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE.
ACTU-ALLY...
HE DIED THIS YEAR OF CANCER.
YOU SEE, MY SON...
...HIS NAME WAS AKIRA...

THAT'S WHY...
BUT THAT WISH CAME TO AN END.

...I WANT TAKUYA.



WE...
WE'D BET-TER—
HERE, TRY THIS ON.
OH...
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE BOUGHT CHILDREN'S CLOTHES.
I HOPE THEY FIT.
YES.
HE SAID HE'D BE RELIEVED.
I WENT TO SEE YOUR FATHER TODAY.
WHAT?
DAD?

THERE'S NOTHING INTERESTING ON...
HYUK HAW HAW HAW HAW
BLIP
WHICH ONE WILL IT BE?
THE ONE ON THE RIGHT!!
SLURP
NOO
SR!P
RAGER SEAFOOD CUP
I WONDER...
...WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW...
...WERE YOU HAPPY?
WHEN I WAS BORN...
NOODL
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HAW HAW HAW HAW
SWAK
RAGER
I WANT THAT TOO.
DAD
....
HAW HAW HAW
WHAM

I GO SEEP NOW!
BWAZA...
WHAT AM I DOING?
KSHHH
KSHHH
MINORU DOESN'T UNDER-STAND WHAT'S GOING ON.
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF ME...
SKWIK
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM ANYWAY.
UH?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

YOU DON'T WANT THAT, DO YOU?
IF WE DON'T GO HOME NOW, WE'LL NEVER SEE DADDY AGAIN!!
UB?
NO "UBS"!! WE'RE GOING HOME!
LET'S GO HOME !!
MINORU ...
SWISH
SPLASH
NO.

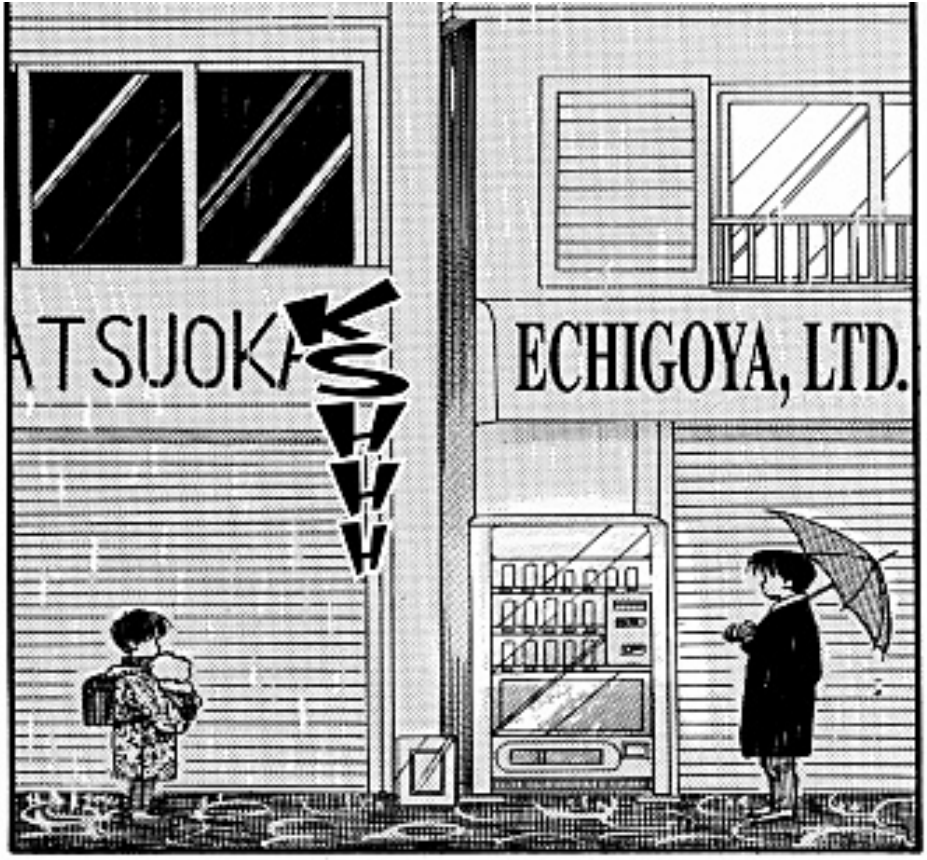
SO...
LET'S SEE, WE'RE RIGHT HERE.
KSHH
I WONDER ...
...WHICH WAY THE STATION IS...
KSHH
PLUP
MINO-RU...
...
BWUZA ...
...DA WAIN'S AW WET. I'B COWD.
KSHH
IT'S ALL BECAUSE I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN DAD.
BUT YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND ANY OF THIS, MINORU.
I'M SORRY.
I'M SORRY.
KSHH

KSHH
KSHH
...YOU STILL HAVE TO GO HOME, MINORU.
EWOO
EVEN IF DAD'S MAD AT ME...
DEAR..
DEAR!
TOMP TOMP
KSHH
I ONLY HAVE 130 YEN.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHOMP
THE CHILDREN ARE GONE!!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR YOU TO BE SIPPING TEA!!
WHAT IS IT?

KSHHH
BWAZA... MINOWU'S COWD...
KSHHH
SPLASH
KLINK KLINK KLINK
BEEP
THUMP
IT'S WARM.
HERE, MINORU.
KUSHH!
COCA-COLA

I'LL CALL DAD AND...
20 YEN.
...
...
...IF HE TELLS ME NOT TO COME HOME...
...I'LL CALL THE KIMURAS OR GON.
KSHHH
KSHHH
BWAZA?

SPLASH
YOU DWINK, BWAZA.
THAT'S OKAY. IT'S FOR YOU, MINORU.
...
KUHH!


A T SUJOKA
KSHHH
ECHIGOYA, LTD.

SPLASH

SPLASH

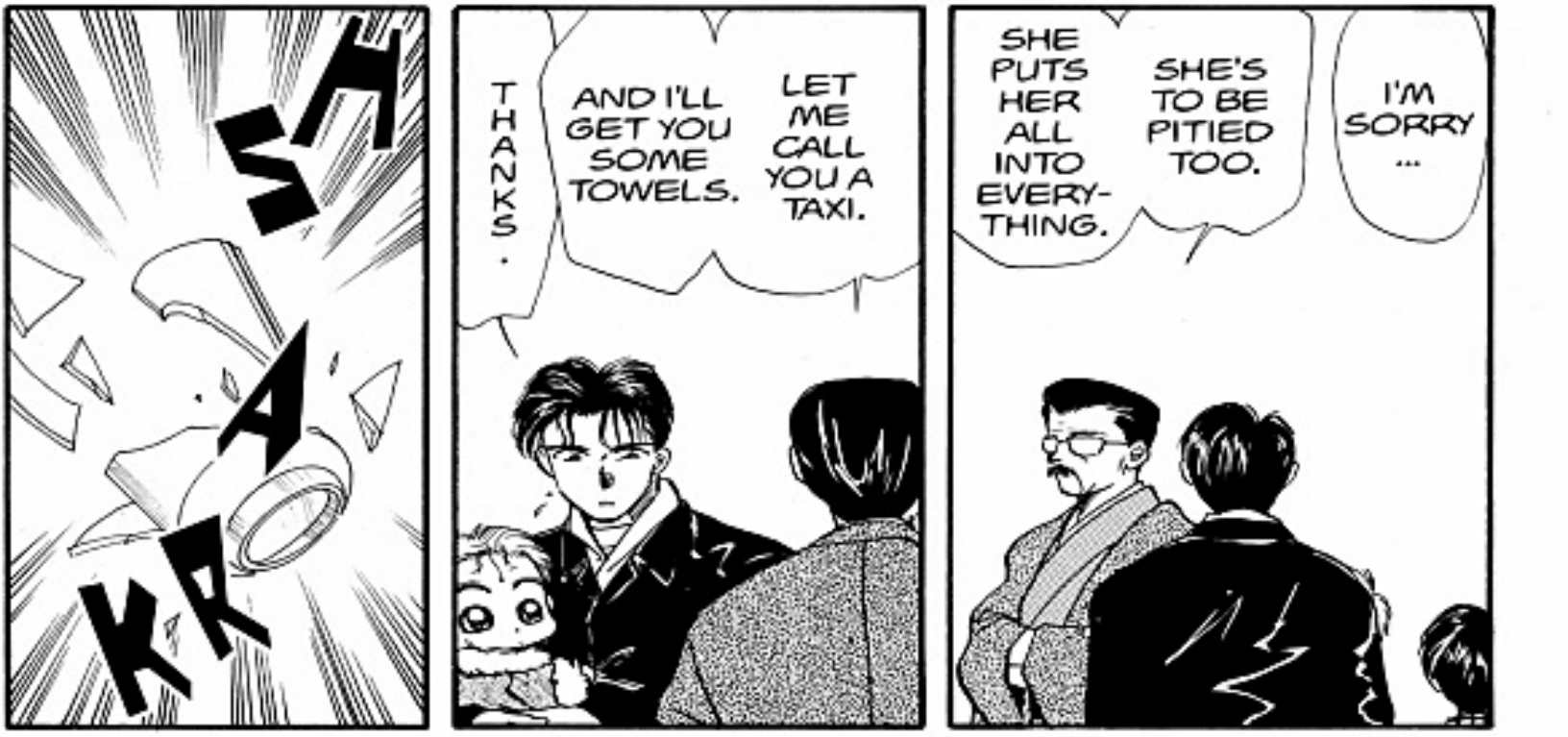
DAD
...
SPLASH

I'M SORRY...
WAAH I SAW-WEE ...
I'M...
...SOR-RY ...
...
I'M SORRY...
...THAT I GOT MAD AT YOU.

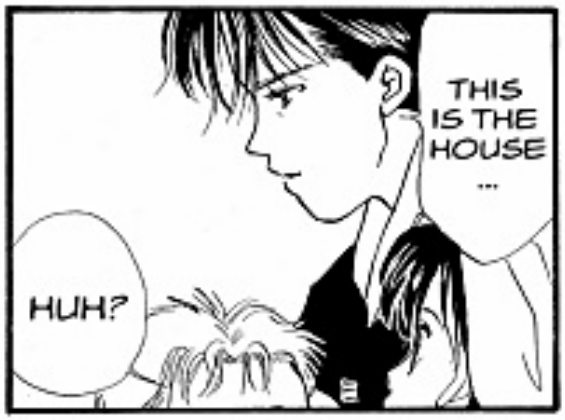
MINORU AND I BAWLED OUR HEADS OFF...
AND DAD...
...JUST STOOD THERE HUGGING US WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.
WAAH
UNH...
...THE WINTER RAIN DIDN'T SEEM SO COLD.
AND FOR SOME REA-SON...
KUHHH
THANK YOU FOR HAVING TAKUYA AND MINORU OVER.
I'LL TAKE THEM HOME NOW.
...

YOU MISUNDERSTOOD MY RELATIONSHIP WITH YUKAKO.
...
IT'S TRUE THAT SHE GOT PREGNANT BEFORE WE WERE MARRIED...
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!!
I WON'T LET YOU TAKE THEM!!
YOU...
...BUT WE WERE VERY MUCH IN LOVE...
...AND MY CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS TO ME.
AND I KNOW...
...THEY NEED THEIR FATHER TOO.
I COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH IT WITHOUT MY CHILDREN.
WHEN YUKAKO DIED...
...I WAS DEVASTATED.

GRR
TOMP TOMP
...ARE MY REASON FOR LIVING.
THESE BOYS...
I'M NOT GIVING UP ANYONE ELSE THAT I LOVE.
I...


SHA
KRA
THANKS.
AND I'LL GET YOU SOME TOWELS.
LET ME CALL YOU A TAXI.
SHE PUTS HER ALL INTO EVERY-THING.
SHE'S TO BE PITIED TOO.
I'M SORRY ...

...YOU ALMOST LOST YOUR MIND. YOU JUST SAT AND WAILED, REMEMBER?
WHEN AKIRA DIED...
...
HOFF
HOFF
...CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND HOW HE FEELS?
AFTER GOING THROUGH THAT...
...AND YUKAKO WERE TOGETHER ...
I'M A WOMAN, AFTER ALL.
...I WOULDN'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE.
...WHY DO YOU ALWAYS SAY THAT?
MOTHER
BUT ...
...WHY CAN'T I HAVE MY DREAM?
IF ONLY AKIRA...
IT'S NO EASY THING TO GET A CHILD.



...I'M SURE...

LOOKING AT YOU TWO...

...THAT YUKAKO LOVED YOU AND YOUR FATHER VERY MUCH.

CHAPTER 27 / THE END

BABY & ME™

Creator: Marimo Ragawa

SBM Title: *Baby & Me*

Date of Birth: September 21

Blood Type: B

Major Works: *Time Limit*, *Baby & Me*, *N.Y. N.Y.*, and *Shanimuni-Go* (Desperately—Go)

Marimo Ragawa first started submitting manga to a comic magazine when she was 12 years old. She kept up her submissions for four years, but to no avail. She decided to submit her work to the magazine *Hana to Yume*, where she received Top Prize in the Monthly Manga Contest as well as an honorable mention (Kasaku) in the magazine's Big Challenge contest. Her first manga was titled *Time Limit*. *Baby & Me* was honored with a Shogakukan Manga Award in 1995 and was spun off into an anime.

Ragawa's work showcases some very cute and expressive line work along with an incredible ability to depict complex emotions and relationships. Some of her other works include *N.Y. N.Y.* and the tennis manga *Shanimuni-Go*.

Ragawa has two brothers and two sisters.

BABY & ME, Vol. 5

The Shojo Beat Manga Edition

This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in Shojo Beat magazine, April 2007–September 2007 issues.

Story & Art by
MARIMO RAGAWA

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Translation/JN Productions
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Mark Griffin
Design/Yuki Ameda
Editors/Pancha Diaz & Shaenon K. Garrity

Editor in Chief, Books/Alvin Lu
Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
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VP of Sales/Gonzalo Ferreyra
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Publisher/Hyoe Narita

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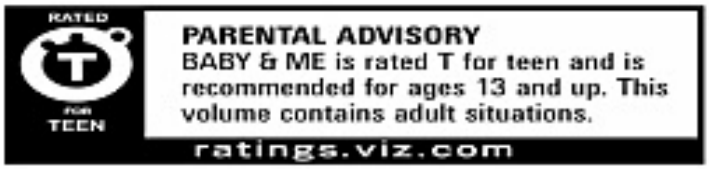
RATED
T
FOR TEEN
PARENTAL ADVISORY
BABY & ME is rated T for teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains adult situations.
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